A Bishop and his Flock

Bishop of Newport

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Rev. J. F. Barragan, O. S.

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BY

JOHN CUTHBERT HEDLEY, O.S.B.

BISHOP OF NEWPORT

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LONDON: BURNS & OATES, LIMITED

NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO: BENZIGER BROTHERS

1903

PREFACE

MANY friends having expressed a wish to have a complete edition of the Pastoral Letters of the past twenty-two years, I here offer to them, and to the public, a reprint of the principal ones. I have made some slight alterations and corrections, and have, in one or two instances, joined one or more Letters together under the same heading.

The treatment of some important subjects will no doubt be found to be somewhat summary and fragmentary; but the volume may serve as a memorial of pastoral work and aspiration during nearly a quarter of a century.

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LLANISHEN,
September 29, 1903.

acc: 3786

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	On God	1
II.	The Service of God	11
III.	On Faith	26
IV.	Divine Grace	37
V.	Conversion	51
VI.	Holy Baptism	63
VII.	The Sacrament of Penance	78
VIII.	The Holy Eucharist	94
IX.	First Communion	106
X.	The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass	118
XI.	The Christian Priesthood	132
XII.	The Sacred Heart	142
XIII.	The Spirit of the Gospel	155
XIV.	On Worldliness	167
XV.	Our Churches	178
XVI.	The Holy Family	184
XVII.	Parents and their Duties	201
XVIII.	Religious Instruction should be Spiritual	214
XIX.	Zeal for Souls	224
XX.	The Observance of Sunday	246

CHAP.		PAGE
XXI.	Kindness in Speech	255
XXII.	Evil Words	267
XXIII.	On Reading	279
XXIV.	Mixed Marriages	291
XXV.	On Ritual	304
XXVI.	Church Music	315
XXVII.	Catholic Children at Non-Catholic Schools	330
XXVIII.	Our Responsibility of Intemperance	345
XXIX.	The Lives of the Saints	358
XXX.	Patron Saints	373
XXXI.	Union among Catholics	386
XXXII.	The Great Encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII.	397

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I

ON GOD

The Christian's instinctive sense of God—How earthly names are applied to Almighty God—God most truly our Father.

Of all the great truths—the truths on which the heart of man rests and which guide him in his moral and spiritual life—the deepest and the most firmly fixed is that which is expressed in the opening words of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth." Take away God, and this world is unintelligible; take away God, and human life is a melancholy puzzle. Take away God, and each human existence drifts like a frail bark which has been cast loose from its moorings and is at the mercy of the waves and currents of the treacherous sea. Take away God, and death hangs over our life's end like a dark and heavy curtain, hiding we know not what, extinguishing hope, and tempting perplexed mortals to give themselves up to this world when the world is bright, and, when it is black, to lift their hands against their own lives.

There is no chance of the idea of God ever being lost to the civilised world. It is amazing, to one who notices and reflects, how closely that idea is knit into the very texture and fibre of the being of man. There are vast numbers who think about God very little indeed. Youth, pleasure, business, and good health combine to fill our poor shallow hearts so full that God is not attended to. But let these pass away or cease, even for a moment—let suffering, poverty, desolation, or old age come on, and what happens? When the mists clear away, the everlasting hills come out. So when the heart is sore or disturbed, God, who was there all the time, is felt and seen. Some men, even when they cannot help remembering Him, make little use, or perhaps even an evil use, of that holy thought. But how many of the simple, the poor, the suffering, naturally and continually turn to God for help, sympathy, support, and consolation! What a good and blessed Christian tradition is represented by the frequent involuntary lifting up of the heart to God, among the multitudes of our Christian people! And how this should be cherished by those who truly understand what God is to us all. How true it is that God has not "left Himself without testimony" (Acts xiv. 16)—not merely making Himself known by the marvels of Creation, but being present and felt in the spirit and heart of every man. Oh let us never so degrade and blind our immortal souls as to lose the sense and the presence of God!

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God is a spirit ; without body, and without any defect, weakness, imperfection, or shortcoming whatever. He is purely simple, eternal, and unchangeable ; in a word He is the Infinite—and the only Infinite. It is not, therefore, easy to find a Name which may be applied to Him without implying something which is unworthy of Him, or which is not exactly true. All our human words and names are founded on material things, or at least on the information given us by our eyes, our ears, and our other senses. But our senses can never see God ; nor can our imagination picture Him. Therefore we can never apply a human name to God without some reserve and qualification. Holy Scripture speaks of His voice, His heart, His arm ; but we know—and the sacred writers well knew—that He has neither voice, heart, nor arm, because He is a pure spirit. What, then, is meant by language such as this ? It means that the things which men effect by their voice or their arm, are effected by God *as if* He had these bodily organs ; but with infinite power. It means that all the things which man can do by any of his powers or faculties, Almighty God can do—but He does them in His own transcendent way, without violence, without emotion, without the shadow of change, serene in His immobility, irresistible in His Omnipotence.

When, therefore, we call God a King, a Master, a Judge, a Friend, or a Father, we are describing Him by human pictures. Earthly kings are fallible,

short-sighted, and mortal; not so Almighty God. No earthly master has absolute dominion; no earthly teacher knows everything. A human judge penetrates not to the conscience. A mortal friend often fails in need; a father, however great his love and solicitude, is ignorant of many things and powerless beyond a certain limit. Accordingly, when we predicate these names of the Infinite God, we must conceive them as if earthly boundaries did not exist, and as if all the imperfections which they imply here below vanished and disappeared. Even then, we do not succeed in giving God a name which adequately describes His ineffable being. Behind all the conceptions, descriptions, and appellations which learning can invent and piety apply, there lies the vast, the limitless, the unsearchable region of the Godhead, never to be explained by any created intelligence, adequately known to Him only whose Knowledge is the same thing as His Being.

And yet, although our God and Creator is so infinite and so incomprehensible, His creatures here on earth know enough of Him to lift their souls in adoration, thanksgiving, and joy. All the good, true, and beautiful things of the world below must be found, in a higher and purer sense, in the being of God. Our souls and minds are the creation of His hand. They are a reflection—though a feeble reflection—of His Being. Therefore, what our souls and minds approve, admire, and long for, must be found, in a nobler state, in God Himself; just as the faint

light, far down in the depths of the ocean, dimly showing the waving weeds and the moving creatures of the sea, is the same light that glows in the sun itself. Whatever is good and lovely to the universal human heart, is to be found, purified of all dross and imperfection, in the Being of God. Doubtless it is difficult, sometimes, to recognise in the corruption and degradation of man, the image and expression of the Deity. But, looking at the human race as a whole, and considering all its history, we can see how fixed and how true its deepest instincts are. And these instincts lead man to God. In God he finds, not a strange code of moral laws, not ideals that contradict his own aspirations; but, on the contrary, all that can strengthen, promote, and explain the good and the right things which his own intelligence recognises. In God, he sees the immutable rule of that law of right and wrong, which, although the mists of passion roll over it sometimes, is on the whole plain and unmistakable to his intelligence. In God, he sees the author of all justice; so that he cannot but feel certain that right will triumph sooner or later. In God, he sees the strong and mighty Master, who disposes all events, recompenses the good, and prevents the wicked from any long-continued or final success. In God, he sees the explanation of human life; for God's existence is not bounded by the limits of the narrow strip of time which we call life, or the world. God was before the world; and when the world has vanished, God

will be as He was in the beginning. Hence His creatures, with immortal souls, belong not to time, but rather to God's own eternity. Thus death, which seems so like a finish, is only an incident in a much longer existence; and thus our earthly life can only be explained by the much larger and infinitely more important fact of eternity. All this food for the spirit we find in what we know of God. He shows Himself to us in many ways—by the natural light and research of our intelligence, and by that revelation of Himself which from time to time, by His chosen servants, and by His only-begotten Son, He has made to the world. There is no science, no education, so necessary, so useful, and so congenial as the study of Almighty God. Whatever a man knows, if he is ignorant of God, he is ignorant indeed; and however much he may be a stranger to the learning and the culture of the world, if he has learnt to turn the eyes of his spirit with persevering devotion upon the God who made him, he possesses a light, an instruction, and a largeness of view which are worthy of an immortal intelligence, and which are a pledge of the life that will never end.

But there is one name given on earth to Almighty God which at once reveals more of His nature, and comes home more nearly to ourselves, than any other. This is the word which is used in the first line of the Apostles' creed, and of the Lord's Prayer—the word *Father*. To call God our father, is to imply a touching nearness to Him, and a tender solicitude on His

part. It is impossible for the heart of man to reflect on what creation means without seeing and feeling that God must be truly a father to all those whom He has made. It is true that He must also be our King, our Master, our Judge. And the heathen nations, in whom the idea of the One God was not always or altogether extinct, found it difficult to reconcile these attributes with that of Father ; so that we read how, sometimes, in their religious rites, there would prevail servile fear, abject terror, attempts at base propitiation, or, again, horrible license, and the conviction that no God regarded or cared for them. But with those who truly worshipped Him, it was very different. They feared Him, and justly feared Him, for He is mighty, and jealous, and hateth wickedness. But, nevertheless, they knew well that He was, and could not help being, their Friend and their Father. He was the Creator, the possessor, the providence of all the things that He had made. "Is not He thy Father, and hath possessed thee, and made thee, and created thee?" (Deut. xxxii. 6). These were the words of the great Hebrew Lawgiver, in that sublime prophecy and canticle which was intended to remind Israel of its God after its leader should have passed away. "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?" (Malachy ii. 10). Thus spoke the last of the Hebrew Prophets, more that a thousand years after Moses. And if in the ancient Law the saints of God thus thought and felt, what must be the feelings of those who, like ourselves, live under the

law of the grace of Jesus Christ? Ours is no longer the spirit of servitude unto fear—but the spirit of adoption, in which we know ourselves to be in a more special way the sons of God, and cry out, with all our faith and charity, Abba! Father! (Rom. viii. 15). When our Lord Jesus Christ taught us how to pray, and uttered that divine form of prayer which is so often on our lips, why did He begin with the word Father? He might have said Creator, or Lord, or used some other name of awe or majesty. But no; it was Father that he chose—in order to win our love and to inspire our confidence. He is our Father by every kind of title. He made us, and nothing can prevent us from belonging to Him. He has made us so that we must eternally possess Him or be for ever miserable; therefore He must watch over us, guide us, and help us. He has redeemed us by His Only Son Jesus Christ Our Lord; and thus we have become in a new way the brothers of that Divine Son, and co-heir with Him of life everlasting. No language can paint or pourtray the essential, unceasing, ever active, ever faithful solicitude of our Heavenly Father for every one of us. Not even the worst of sins can extinguish it. How did He chide His people, in the Prophet Ezechiel, because they said, sinful as they knew themselves to be, "The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath abandoned the land"! (Ezechiel viii. 12). Let us be sure of this, that no earthly father or mother ever had one thousandth part of that affection and solicitude which

God our Father has for even the worst of sinners. "Can a woman forget her little child? and if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee. For I have written thee in My hands" (Isaias xlix. 15). He knows what is best for us; He showers upon us His graces; He is with us in our temptations; He directs the circumstances of our life so that we may more easily save our souls; and He orders the hour of our death so that we may die at the moment that is most propitious. And all our life long, one of His bright angels is by our side, His servant, His messenger, His deputy, illuminating, protecting, warning, helping and cherishing the soul that the Heavenly Father loves.

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth." We do believe, dear children, in Jesus Christ. But our faith, we must confess, is very cold. Where is our religion? Where is our piety? Is it not true that a large number of professed Catholics live almost without religion? God, our Creator, Father, and last end, is forgotten and abandoned. Men live for their passions, their work, their selfishness. God's churches are empty, and God's religion is treated as if the Almighty had no right to interfere on His own earth—the earth which He has created and redeemed.

Let the practical result of these our words be a determination to practise our holy religion. We believe in God, but we must remember that no man can serve his God without an effort. There may

have been times in the world's history, when people were drawn to the practice of religion by the example of the crowd; and there may still be localities where the ordinary man or woman is thus carried along as it were by the stream. There is no chance of any one being carried along by any religious current in these days, and where we live. The current sets the other way. Therefore, if a man wishes to be religious, he must bestir himself. He must begin to pray, morning and evening; he must attend his Church, in spite of laziness or difficulties; he must frequent the Sacraments of the New Law at fixed times; and, before everything, he must set about giving up mortal sin, if he be living in it. All this need not be difficult; but it certainly demands an effort. That effort must be made, or else life is a mistake and a failure.

II

THE SERVICE OF GOD

The evil of the times is the not recognising that we must serve God. In order to serve Him we must, first, remember Him ; secondly, honour Him ; and thirdly, fear Him.

Among the truths that we are reminded of in the liturgy, the prayers and the practice of the Catholic Church, there is not one which is more deeply important than that which is expressed by the mouth of Our Lord Himself in the Gospel of the first Sunday of Lent. To the Evil One who tempted Him Our Saviour replied in those words of Deuteronomy, "The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve" (St. Matthew iv. 10).

Let us turn to the complete passage which Our Lord here abridges and paraphrases. It is part of a most solemn discourse, addressed by the great Lawgiver, Moses, to the whole nation of the Israelites, whom he had called together before him. "Take heed diligently," he says, "lest thou forget the Lord, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and shalt serve Him only. . . . You shall not go after strange gods of all the nations that are round about you : because the Lord thy God is a

jealous God in the midst of thee; lest at any time the wrath of the Lord thy God be kindled against thee. . . . Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God, as thou temptedst Him in the place of temptation. Keep the precepts of the Lord thy God, and the testimonies and the ceremonies which He hath commanded thee. And do that which is pleasing and good in the sight of the Lord, that it may be well with thee; and going in thou mayest possess the goodly land, concerning which the Lord swore to thy fathers" (Deuter. vi. 13 *sqq.*).

The "goodly land" of which Moses spoke, was the Land of Promise; but the Holy Spirit, who by the ministry of Moses, speaks to the whole race of mankind, would have us understand these words of that future inheritance—that country of God's own—that promised Land of Bliss—of which the hills and plains of Palestine were only the figure and the symbol. We all recognise, if we are Christians, that we must live for Heaven, and that our life upon earth must be directed to the making sure of that only true and real life which is on the other side of death. We recognise this; yet the most striking feature in the world at this moment is the almost total absence of any preparation of the sort. How many men are there who think seriously about Eternity? Where is God's share in the lives of the present generation? What are their aims, their purposes, their occupations, except worldly, selfish, sinful, and reckless? You will say, the world is no

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worse now than it has ever been. But is this absolutely true? There has always been wickedness enough; there has never been a time when God has not been lamentably neglected and forgotten. But what distinguishes the present moment is the absence of a publicly recognised Christian duty. As the world goes on, a man's religious concerns are being more absolutely left to himself. Neither laws nor ordinances constrain him; the State has nothing to say to him, and he has given up hearing the Church; whilst public custom and opinion are gradually wearing thin and disappearing. This is no small evil. It may be said that to force men to be religious is only to make hypocrites of them. But it is not altogether so. Public sanctions in matters of religion and morality are productive of two good results; they protect numbers of well-meaning but weak Christians from the tyranny of over-bearing vicious custom; and they keep multitudes out of temptation, and so enable them, not necessarily to lead lives of heroic virtue, but at least to keep well within the ordinary commandments of Almighty God. The banishment of God from public and legal recognition; the disappearance of all laws as to Christian profession; the cessation on the part of the State to enforce any part of God's law, except what concerns man's relation with man; the impossibility, in a country like this, of any regulations for public worship—all this is against the Kingdom of God, and makes for the work of the devil.

The Catholic, who believes in the authority of a teaching Church, in the Sacramental system, in the consoling doctrine of the Real Presence, and in the other teachings which go to make up Christianity, taken in its complete and adequate sense—the Catholic cannot, and does not, take advantage of this great inheritance unless he firmly and clearly holds that he must live this mortal life for God, and for God alone. Unless he appreciates what his immortal soul is, and what everlasting life is, the noble gifts which have been purchased by the precious Blood of Christ are to him no more than golden coins to an ignorant savage; he may wonder at them, and even cling to them—but as to using them as they are intended to be used, his condition of mind makes it impossible. It seems sometimes as if God's redeeming love were too generous, too lavish, for the narrow and perverse natures of a race which insists on occupying itself with the dross and mud of material things. What is the use of Nazareth, of the Cross, of a living Church, of the exquisite counsels of a perfect life, of the mighty agencies of the Sacraments, of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, of the Blessed Sacrament itself, to those who persist in living as if they had no souls to save, nor any more concern with eternity and beatitude than the animals in their midst? It would seem as if what men required were not these finely-tempered weapons, this food for angels, these instruments of perfection, but something far more gross and common; some gospel of fear, some convincing display of irre-

sistible power, some simple code of elementary morality —just enough to keep them in the direction of their last end, without any pretence of lifting them to the supernatural, or forming within them the likeness of Christ. As to Non-Catholics, a very large proportion dwell contentedly in a land "without ways and without water"; they may serve God to some extent, or they may not, but, in any case, they do not make any adequate use of Christianity. The reason why so many Catholics, even those who come to Church and approach the Holy Table, are so tepid, negligent, and scandalous, is, that they have never taken in with their real minds the very elementary principle of all religion—that a man exists in order to serve, not his own wills, fancies, and follies, but God his Creator. Until he apprehends this, the magnificence of Catholicism is of no more use to him than the breezes of heaven to the shipwrecked sailor. They are glorious, they are powerful, they are propitious, but his ship with her masts and sails lies at the bottom of the sea.

There are three duties which, by his very creation, a human and rational being is bound to fulfil; duties, indeed, which are almost instincts of his nature, and which he would feel it quite natural to carry out were it not for bad traditions, bad lessons, and evil surroundings, acting upon the blindness and the weakness of our fallen state. The first duty is—to *remember* God. Because we cannot see God, we have to make sure that we always remember Him. Yet, when we say that we cannot see Him, we speak of our bodily

senses only. For a man has other eyes than those of the body. If he would accustom himself to use the eyes of his mind, he would see better with them than he does. Thought and reflection—these are the names given to the use of the interior faculty of sight. In religious matters, this power which a Christian has of thinking, judging, and wishing is strengthened by a most powerful gift of God, called the gift of Divine Faith. There is no reason, therefore, why we should not be able to remember God. We know very well that He is our Father, Who longs to make us truly and eternally happy; our best and only Friend, Who will never desert us, even when death shuts all other friends out; and the God Who made our hearts so peculiarly for Himself that, whatever we do, they must be miserable without Him. Before we began our existence, God was reigning and was thinking of each of us. When we die we shall still be alive to Him. All the mighty worlds of this universe, with the innumerable laws and forces which produce its motion, its heat and its light, are controlled by His Almighty Hand, and neither man nor all physical nature together can in the slightest degree hinder God from rewarding His servants in the long run, or can save from the ministry of retribution those who persistently refuse to obey. To forget the living God, to forget the strong God, to forget the just God —can there be anything more irrational or more criminal? To forget our only Friend, the Maker of our being, the Lover of our immortal soul—can there

be anything more unaccountable? It is true that we have occupations and distractions. But if we gave our minds, as rational beings could do, to the duty of remembering God, these things would not stand in our way. For example: Any man who wishes to make sure of remembering a duty or an appointment will fix a time for it. Why should there not be fixed times for remembering God? This is what the preacher is always saying. If you would remember your God, have your fixed time for prayer — for prayer in the morning, for prayer at night. If you would remember your God, hearken to what is said about Him; do not neglect to read about Him; and have definite times for listening to such instructions and reading such books. If you would remember your God, make good use of the Sunday. On that day you have more time to yourself. Hear Mass devoutly; nothing keeps God in the mind and memory so effectively as the Holy Mass. But do more than that; visit the Church at least once again; hear God's word; join in public prayer. Any man who prays daily, keeps the Sunday devoutly, listens to sermons, joins some devout society or confraternity, and reads pious books according to his ability or opportunity, will find that he remembers his God. There will be hours and times when he will not be actually thinking of Him; but his thought will never be far away; and by degrees he will arrive at the fulfilment of that exhortation of St. Paul, "Whatsoever you do, in word or work, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus

Christ (Colossians iii. 17). These words were addressed, not to priests and nuns, but to the whole body of the faithful, with all their work, business, and occupation. They are by no means impossible to carry out; why should not the redeemed children of God aim at fulfilling them? How terrible a thing it is to forget God! For the time will come when all other things will vanish into smoke—when the tide of life shall ebb and our once busy thought and brain will be blank and empty. Then we shall look for God, and perhaps look in vain. Therefore, let us remember Him now when we are able, that He may not hide Himself in that day from our sight.

The second duty of the reasonable man is to *honour* his God. Few will dispute that God must be honoured. But look around at the world; and let us look at ourselves. How many of us neglect God; how many honour Him only with their lips, or perhaps with certain external signs! The neglect of God, or the passing Him over in order to attend to other matters, is a crying sin of this generation. Let us clearly understand that we do not honour God unless we occupy ourselves about Him. We have a mind to understand, a will to choose, and a heart to love. These faculties make up the being which God has given us. That being must find its chief work and business in the supreme and inexhaustible Creator, who is more to us than all the universe besides. To Him we our bound to give our thought, our time, our solicitude. However busy we may

be, we must find time for God. We must lift the warmth of our heart to Him—our adoration, our praise, our thanksgiving, our love. How is this duty fulfilled in the life of most men? We need not speak of those who are recklessly given over to sin. These men dishonour God, and make no pretence to do anything else. Neither need we speak of that section of so-called Christian people who are being gradually led to disbelieve in God altogether, or to disbelieve in so many of His attributes that what remains is no longer God, but an idol of their own making. We must look nearer home; we must speak of those who invoke the name of Christ and who take their places before the altar of God. Who is there that seeks the face of God? Who retires to commune with God? Who prays from his real heart? Who prolongs his prayer after the few minutes that he is, perhaps, accustomed to give to it? God is the Infinite Creator; as such, He claims the whole of creation. As the Prophet says, all the forests of the Lebanon would not furnish Him a holocaust, nor all the beasts that wander therein be enough to consume in His honour (Isaias xl. 16). Yet the offering which alone pleases Him is the incense of an adoring heart. And this—need it be said, how many refuse to give it Him? They refuse, not because they have turned their back upon Him in absolute impiety, and not because they have no faith in His holy Name; but because, among all the work they do from morning till night, they do

not understand the chief effort of their faculties ought to belong to the God who made them. Their brains are busy all the day, their hearts are beating without cessation, their tongues are going, their nerve and muscle are in restless activity; from the moment they awake, through all the hours of daylight and far into the night, occupation never ceases; yet with the exception of the moments called "night prayer" or "morning prayer," the brain forms no thought of God, the heart never beats for its last and sovereign end, the immortal faculties of the Godlike soul neither worship Him, nor thank Him, nor petition Him for the priceless gifts which His hands hold ready for the asking. This is wrong. There should be more room and space in a Christian life for the honour of God. Both the well-to-do and the poor should make some effort to carry out the chief purpose for which they live and breathe. They should not leave the task of honouring God to those servants of God who in the retirement, of their cloisters, seven times a day, and also in the silence of the night, as the Psalmist sings, utter His praise with a continuousness that may be humbly compared to the ever-resounding songs of the angelic choir. All of us look forward one day to join the blessed in heaven; there is no better preparation than to begin to imitate them on earth. If it be asked how this can be done, and how the sordid lives of men can best be lifted up to honour God, it may be answered that the Catholic Church provides the means. Prayer may be made anywhere; but the

Church exists, among other reasons, that prayer may be easy, joyous, and unceasing. For this purpose, in Catholic countries, the Church multiplies her altars and rings her bells for daily masses and solemnities; for this her temples stand open all the day long; for this she carries out the august calendar of her festivals; for this she enthrones the Holy Eucharist; for this she calls most Holy Mary blessed from generation to generation; for this she uplifts the banner of her Saints, and diffuses her light, her worship, and her spiritual transforming influences over every business and occupation of human life. If a Christian did nothing more than follow the mind and the invitation of the Church, he would live in the fulfilment of his duty to honour God. True, he cannot carry his Church about with him to his daily occupation. But he might easily carry the Church's spirit. The ideas, the thoughts, the inspiration, which would come to him when he was before the altar would consecrate all his time and labour. A man who frequents the holy Offices of religion is one who will find himself at all times giving God His right and supreme place. Should not every fibre of the heart long that God may be honoured and praised by all? We live in a universe in which every element proclaims His majesty; shall man alone neglect Him? All the earth is full of His Glory; the host of Heaven adoreth Him; His glory covereth the Heavens and the earth is full of His praise. Day to day uttereth speech, and night to night sheweth knowledge. The sea and the dry

land, the mountains and the forests, the light and darkness, the seasons that follow in their order, all the living creatures that His hand hath made and His providence preserves—all things here below, in emulation of the angels above, lift up to Him the song which His Prophet has recorded, "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of Hosts; all the earth is full of Thy glory" (Isaias vi. 3). Only the heart of man is silent! Only men are cold, preoccupied, busied with their own small interests and their selfish cares, with no feeling for Him who reigneth for ever and ever. Can we not find in this most lamentable neglect a reason for making a practical resolution? That resoluion might be—to honour God by attendance at Church. There are four things especially included in this resolution; to be present in Church always once on Sundays (as we are bound to be), and always twice, if possible; to hear as many instructions as we can about God and the mysteries of His love; to be really earnest in praying when at Church; and to try to understand and follow the festivals, seasons, and Saints' Days.

Our third duty to Almighty God is to *fear* Him. Perhaps this should have come first; for "the fear of the Lord," as the Psalm says, "is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. cx. 10). But it is equally true that it is the "fulness of wisdom" (Eccles. i. 20), and that no man perseveres in a good life who does not keep up day by day in his heart and feelings that holy and salutary fear which springs from our very con-

ception of God. This fear is not the fear of the slave. It is not the abject dread of God's anger and vengeance. A fear of this kind, although it may sometimes serve to arouse a degraded nature or to check a reckless sinner in his course, is not enough for the Christian who is redeemed by the precious Blood. To fear God is rather to fear God's turning His face away. It is the kind of fear which prevents a generous heart from spoiling what is beautiful, darkening what is bright, embittering a kind and loving nature, grieving a sensitive disposition, rejecting proffered love. It is true, God cannot grieve, or be embittered; but the words may justly be used to express the evil of human wickedness. It is this evil which the Christian heart should sincerely fear. God's punishments are inevitable; His law is unchangeable, and His hand is Almighty. This thought may help to strengthen our good desires. But what we should most dread is the evil of sin and of God's dishonour. We are poor and imperfect creatures. We fear a hundred things; but as for God, we are bold and careless. We fear this person and that; we fear worldly losses; we fear to be slighted or despised; we fear anything that can hurt us or injure our prospects; but God, Who is before all and above all and at the end of all, we fear very little. The nearness of mortal sin causes us no anxiety; occasions which are full of sinful temptations are encountered with a light heart; we walk among the dangers of a worldly life as unconcerned

as a child among poisonous serpents. We live in the midst of evil language, dishonesty, slander, and impurity, and we do not feel any apprehension or solicitude for these immortal souls of ours which their Creator and their heavenly Father loves so much. We send our children into bad company, into the streets, into every kind of temptation, and we do not dread God's avenging thunderbolts—or that millstone which is ready to drown in the depths of the sea those who scandalise or neglect the souls of little ones. "Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and magnify Thy Name? For Thou only art Holy" (Apocalypse xv. 4). Can a reasonable being continue to walk the earth in a state of deadly sin and not fear the awful holiness of God? Can he carry his guilt about and not tremble, knowing that a moment may bring him face to face with his Judge and Eternity? Men do this; and some of us have done it. That we may never do it again, let us pray for the gift of holy Fear. To obtain it we must reflect, we must pray, and we must arouse ourselves. The reason why most men do not fear God is because they never think about Him. Here again, then, we come upon the necessity for frequenting the duties of holy religion. A man comes to Church; he goes to confession and receives Holy Communion; he leaves the Church and returns to his home, to his street, to his work, to his friends. But there is a change in him. He is more particular, more on his guard; he seems wishful not

to spoil some good work, not to hurt some loving friend. Yes—he fears the Lord! He has found that blessed fear in the holy Sacraments, at the foot of the Altar, in the words of the minister of God. May we all thus seek it and find it! For "the eyes of the Lord are upon them that fear Him. He is their powerful protector and strong stay. . . . He raiseth up the soul and enlighteneth the eyes, and giveth health and life and blessing" (Ecclesiasticus xxxiv. 19).

Let us then be anxious to learn the lesson of giving our whole hearts to God. Let us strive to find out how to remember Him, to honour Him, and to fear Him. These things lead to His love; and they contain His love. United to God in filial love, we shall use this world only to draw us nearer to Him; and we shall find, in His innumerable gifts, graces, and sacraments some foretaste of the everlasting inheritance which He longs that we may gain.

III

ON FAITH

Faith a worship of the heart ; a conviction or certainty as to revealed truth and the things to come—Internal sins against Faith—Catholics bound to learn their Faith ; and to make acts of Faith—The exterior profession of Faith in this country not easy—Our view of non-Catholic sects ; our duty to pray for their conversion, to give explanations, and to show good example—How scandal is given in matters of Faith.

It is a distinctive mark of Catholics throughout the world to be sensitive and particular in everything that relates to the integrity and purity of the holy Faith which they have the happiness to possess. The Catholic Faith is a direct communication from God, the Father of light, and the zealous lover of souls. Men have not been left to the labour of their own intelligence, to obscure investigation, to guess-work, or to the hesitating guidance of rival philosophers. God has spoken—and His utterance is called Revelation. He has spoken, not merely by the things He has made—by the visible universe, by the instincts of nature, by the powerful reason of man—but also in an ultra-natural way, by His Son Jesus Christ, by the Apostles whom His Spirit inspired, and by the teaching Church which that Spirit

illuminates and guides during all time, even to the consummation of the world. To accept the Catholic Faith, therefore, is not merely to give intellectual assent to certain views, or practically to acquiesce in certain arrangements. Faith is the worship of the loyal heart. Faith is a clinging, such as that with which one clings to a father, or a sovereign. Faith is the warm fervour of that will-power which rules all human action, and which adores in the divine Revelation the clear utterance of Him Who alone deserves to be loved for His own sake. Faith is light, and faith is service; it guides the reason in thinking, directs the moral powers in conduct, and fills the heart with a spirit of personal devotion to Almighty God, recognising that any abandonment, any defection, any denial, whether it be before men or merely in the heart, must be not only a mistake, a wandering from the right path, but also an offence, a slight, an injury to God—or, in other words, a greater or a lesser Sin.

The best definition of Faith is that which is given in the inspired words of the Apostle in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Now Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not." In this memorable sentence we have the description of a spiritual quality or gift, a commencement or instalment of life everlasting, which causes the human mind to accept what it cannot clearly prove—that is, the truths revealed by God. By the word "evidence" is not meant

logical demonstration, but certainty—and this distinguishes Faith from mere opinion or probability. By the phrase "things that appear not," is denoted that obscurity which human reason must find in the mysteries of revelation, and which marks off Faith from the sphere in which the intellect can attain demonstration and see plainly. And in the expression "things to be hoped for," we have divine Faith distinguished from ordinary faith, which may indeed believe, but which does not turn man's face to eternal beatitude. For divine Faith, labouring as it does under the darkness which must accompany mortal conditions, nevertheless seems to afford to the devout believer the touch or grasp—the very "substance"—of the glorious things of the time to come.

The sin which is committed by those who fail in their duty to this great gift of God, may be either interior or exterior—either of the mind, or of outward behaviour. We are bound to believe, and we are bound to profess our belief. "With the heart," says St. Paul, "we believe unto justice, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans x. 9). Interior belief is a condition of justification —in other words, of salvation; and exterior profession is also a condition of salvation.

It is hardly necessary, on an occasion like this, to dwell upon sins of infidelity or of heresy. The Catholic flock, in this country, have no desire to disbelieve, doubt, or discuss the great truths of the

Catholic faith, and little temptation to do so. They repeat their Creed with devotion; they accept their Catechism with filial duty, and they are happy to guide themselves by the ordinary teaching of the Catholic Church as proposed to them day by day from the altar. But there are two important points which may here be urged. First, is it not true that Catholics are much too negligent in *learning* their Faith? It is very praiseworthy to be prepared to accept whatever the Church proposes. But it would be still better to take the trouble to acquire a wide and accurate knowledge of those sublime revelations, those salutary doctrines, and those most useful laws and precepts, which it is the office of the Catholic Church to proclaim aloud to an indifferent world. Doctrine, as we are taught in holy Scripture, is intended for edification. Dogma, definitions, articles of belief, are not mere learned talk or abstract knowledge; they are meant to draw men to Christ, and to lead them to their heavenly country. The more we know about God and the Church, about Jesus Christ, the Sacraments, Our Blessed Lady, and the Saints, the more are we stimulated to the love of God, to the detestation of sin, and to the practice of piety. It is not enough to have learnt our Catechism in the days of childhood. A Catholic should never cease to learn his religion, and to meditate upon it. That is the reason why the Church insists so strongly on her priests giving regular and careful instruction from the altar, and especially on their frequently explain-

ing the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. All Catholics, therefore, should consider it a duty to attend sermons and instructions in the Church. Those who have leisure should read. It is easy, for a very small sum, to acquire books and leaflets on all the points of Catholic faith. There are amongst us numbers of men and women, more or less educated, to whom their own holy religion is known very vaguely and superficially, and to whom its real riches and splendour are as strange and foreign as the interior of the empire of China. Can we expect that those who know so little of their Redeemer's kingdom should either love Him warmly or serve Him loyally?

The other point is this—that Catholics should not omit to make, or elicit, *acts* of faith. To lift up the heart to God in the ardent expression of our faith is to worship Him, to give Him honour and gratitude, to strengthen in our souls the faith that we have, and to merit Divine grace for its protection and its practice. Therefore, on Sundays, and daily in our morning and night prayers, there should be devout utterance of our faith in God and in His Church, and of our pious acceptance of the great mysteries of revelation.

The *external profession* of our faith has great and special difficulties in a country like this. We live in the midst of unbelief. There are those who deny Christianity altogether, and those who deny what we hold to be essential doctrines of Christianity. You are well aware that, in all ages, it has been, and is,

the teaching of Catholicism that there is "no salvation outside of the Church." By this we mean, first, that any one who, formally and with sufficient information, rejects the Divine authority of Christ's teaching Church, commits a grievous sin againt God; and, next, that the means of salvation are ordinarily found only in the Church. Thus, we cannot help looking upon the unbelief around us as a dishonour to God, as a sinful and lamentable state, and as the worst of misfortunes to all who are affected by it. Non-Catholics in general, with their so-called churches, sects, associations, and organisations, are, to a Catholic, a rebel host—rebels against God and against His Church—with whom, in religious matters, there can be no truce, no treaty, no transaction. "Whosoever revolteth and continueth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God" (2 John v. 9).

This is the view which Holy Scripture, ancient tradition, and the continuous teaching of the Catholic Church force us to take of Protestantism. But at the same time it must be carefully noted that we do not presume to judge any individual Protestant. Whether any particular person is guilty in the sight of God depends upon many considerations; no man can know the secrets of the heart and of the conscience, which it belongs to God alone to read. It is clear that there are in this country multitudes of persons to whom the existence and prerogatives of the Catholic Church have never been adequately made known. As long as these persons adhere to

a rebel army we must treat them, officially, as rebels ; but it is not for us to pronounce upon their formal sinfulness.

Moreover, our duty to our non-Catholic neighbours does not allow us to remain aloof, in an attitude of dislike or contempt. We are bound, first of all, to pray for their conversion. If we have any love of God, we must love the souls for whom He has died. Like the great Apostle, we cannot contemplate the misfortune of those who do not share in our Faith without "great sadness and sorrow of heart," and we should be willing, like him, even "to be anathema from Christ, for (our) brethren who are (our) kinsmen according to the flesh" (Romans ix. 1). All zealous Catholics pray regularly and perseveringly for the conversion of the country, and especially for the conversion of those who belong to their own diocese. Hence those pious associations which are now in existence, such as the "Confraternity of our Lady of Compassion," founded by Pope Leo XIII. ; the "Guild of Ransom," and others

Next, we are bound to be prepared, according to our opportunities, to give explanation of Catholic practices, and reasons for Catholic doctrine to those who show a disposition to inquire. This duty chiefly affects priests and the educated laity. It is St. Peter's injunction that we "be always ready to satisfy every one that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us" (1 Peter iii. 15). Plain speaking may be necessary sometimes, to show that we are in

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earnest, and to prevent the simple from being imposed upon. But bitterness always leaves a rankling wound and stimulates ill-will. It was the way of St. Francis of Sales to give his Calvinist friends the credit of good intention, and to recognise to the full the good truth which was mixed up with their errors. How many of those who distrust Catholicism are truly anxious to advance the kingdom of God? How touching, sometimes, are their devotion to Christ, their recognition of religion in civil and social life, their practical charity, and other good qualities! We should be glad to acknowledge these things wherever we find them, and solicitous at the same time to impart such information as may show where may be found that full and adequate system of doctrine and sacraments which a loving Saviour has left as the inheritance of the Christian world.

Thirdly, it is the duty of Catholics to forward the conversion of Protestants by giving them good example. There are two ways of "scandalising" non-Catholics and keeping them back from Catholicism. One is, by what is ordinarily called bad conduct; by an evil life; by drunkenness, immorality, dishonesty, and uncharitableness. It is not fair to judge of a religion by the bad behaviour of Catholics in this or that country. The Church, viewed as a world-wide kingdom, furnishes an ample demonstration of her right to be called "holy." But, as a fact, the people of South Wales judge her by the behaviour of the Catholics of South Wales. We have, therefore, the

serious responsibility of living so as to cause men to honour our holy Faith. Any man or woman who misbehaves is undoubtedly answerable for the sneers, contempt, and disregard which are too often directed against the religion that we love.

The second way of preventing Protestants from approaching the Church is by letting them see, or giving them reason to think, that we consider one religion as good as another. This may easily be done, and there are many Catholics who make very little account of it. For example, there are Catholics who do not scruple to attend Protestant religious services. We have already seen that Protestantism is a revolt against God, and God's law. It is evident, therefore, that to associate oneself in non-Catholic religious worship is to join in such revolt, and is a grievous sin. Individual Protestants *may* worship without guilt, and even meritoriously in God's sight; but their services are officially heretical and schismatical. Much more guilty would a Catholic be if he sought a Sacrament at the hands of a Protestant clergyman, and that whether the Sacrament were null through defect of Orders, as in the case of Penance and the Holy Eucharist, or did not depend on Orders, as Baptism and Marriage. A Catholic father or mother who takes a child to a Protestant Church for baptism is guilty of grievous sin. A Catholic who has recourse to a Protestant Church to get married is also guilty of grievous sin. The reason in both cases is clear; both acts amount to

a denial of the Faith. It may be that the Catholic in each case remains still a Catholic at heart; but it is a sin to deny Christ externally even when you continue to believe in Him in your heart. For a similar reason it is wrong to assist Protestantism by money, influence, or patronage; for example, to lay the foundation-stone of a Protestant place of worship, or to assist at the opening of such places, to support concerts or bazaars which are for distinctly Protestant purposes, to subscribe for the erection or repair of Protestant churches, or to take part in entertainments promoted for such objects. The reason why these things are sins against the Faith is partly because, whenever a thing is wrong, co-operation in it is wrong also, but chiefly because when such things are done, both Protestants and Catholics (especially the less educated Catholics) are led to think that those who do them are indifferent to their holy religion, and probably consider one religion as good as another. This is a grievous scandal. It is conduct of this kind which ruins the Catholic cause, by destroying Catholic principle, and introducing a laxity in Faith which leads to apostasy. It is true that non-Catholics are often extremely kind in helping Catholic Churches and schools, and that it is hard for a Catholic to refuse to make the return they sometimes seem to expect. But in these matters we must make up our minds, if necessary, to suffer patiently the stigma of "bigotry." No Catholic can be a Catholic at all without being "intolerant" of

Protestantism, even while loving and admiring individual Protestants. And, besides, their view is different from ours. They, on their principles, need not be—cannot be—exclusive, as we must be. They cannot, therefore, reasonably be offended if Catholics ask and accept their help for religious purposes, and yet decline to help them in return.

I commend these reflections to the faith and goodwill of all. Scandals are not very frequent amongst us. But there is reason to think that some Catholics really do not understand Catholic principles and Catholic practice in things relating to the public profession of their holy religion. Pastors, therefore, should from time to time, without exaggeration or bitterness, explain to their flocks what they should think and how they should behave ; and we should all pray fervently for that grace which St. Paul invokes upon the Colossians—that we may "continue in the Faith, grounded, and settled, and immovable" (Colossians i. 23).

IV

DIVINE GRACE

The being "born again"; the true and the erroneous sense of that phrase—The Catholic doctrine laid down—How sanctifying Grace is given: the absolute necessity, in adults, of due dispositions—How a man may be justified without Sacraments—Sacramental institutions stimulate and bring into play all our spiritual faculties—The Sacraments give grace beyond what our own dispositions would obtain—Some of the consequences of non-sacramental religion.

The relations of the spiritual and immortal soul of man with the supernatural communications of the bounty of his Redeemer are of supreme interest to all believers in Christ. The subject of Divine Grace, therefore, is very important; and as there is reason to think that many Catholics have vague and imperfect ideas on what Grace is and how it is acquired, it may be useful to run through some of the chief points of Catholic teaching on so momentous a subject.

It is not too much to say that the doctrine of Grace is the great dividing line between the Catholic and the Protestant idea of morality. It is not that we differ absolutely and at all points. We agree in thinking that a man cannot please God unless he is honest, temperate, just, and charitable to his neighbour. The heathens, indeed, went as far as this,

and some of the best of them have written with great beauty on what are called the moral virtues. But it has been recognised by all believers in the New Testament that Christianity requires something more than this. Our Lord said a strange and mysterious thing. He said that unless a man was born again of water and the Holy Spirit he could not enter into the kingdom of heaven (John iii. 5). Now, from this text, and texts of a similar import, and from the sense in which the Church has construed them, Catholics have always seen that, in order that a man might be the inheritor of heaven, his soul must undergo some kind of change—a new spiritualisation—an invisible but real occupation by the Holy Spirit—which might fittingly be called, in Scriptural language, the "new birth." By his physical birth, a man enters the physical world with his natural powers, possibilities, and rights. By the new or supernatural birth, he enters another world altogether—the world of the supernatural, the system created by the Blood of Calvary, the order or dispensation at the end of which is to come, like the goal of a journey, the bliss of God's face-to-face Vision.

It is needless to say that Protestants as well as ourselves admit, as far as words go, the doctrine of the "new birth." But the agreement is really one of words, and nothing more. One of the fundamental tenets of Protestantism, proclaimed by Luther and Calvin alike, is that human nature is so vitiated by Original Sin that it is incapable of being restored.

Man, they say, is now corrupt—with every sort of evil inclination and propensity; that corruption is sin; it goes on working, and it produces the works of sin; there is no getting rid of it; as we are born, so we live and so we die. How, then, would these teachers say that men can be saved? Only by this—that Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, does not *impute* to us this natural sinfulness and constant sinning. He turns His face away—throws a veil over the evil—decides to regard it not. But it is there all the same, and always there; and the saint is really no different from the sinner. You must persuade yourself that God has thus justified you, and all will be well. Works which men call evil are really of no consequence; works which men call good are of no consequence either. The one and the other may occasionally serve as an indication of God's acceptance or the reverse. But as for yourself, just as the sun shines on a dunghill and yet makes it no sweeter or purer, so you receive salvation without being anything the better; all your corruptions remain; not one of your wounds or weaknesses is healed.

This fundamental view of the soul's relations with sanctifying grace logically leads to many undesirable consequences. These consequences, however—at least some of the worst of them—are disclaimed by many Protestants; and there is no need to insist upon them at this moment; we must simply leave it to themselves to reconcile the possibility of any

doctrine of "good works," for example, with this Protestant dogma of permanent inherent corruption. But it is necessary to insist upon the dogma itself, because their attitude towards the Catholic doctrine of the Sacraments cannot otherwise be understood.

It is evident, therefore, that when a Protestant speaks of the "new birth" he can mean nothing more than has just been described. Whether it comes by baptism, by conversion, by faith, by inspiration, or by sheer conviction, it makes no other difference than an external one. It does not purify the soul; it does not change the heart; it does not extinguish concupiscence; it does not enable a man or woman to do works really pleasing to God; it does not give us any new spiritual faculty, or make it possible for us to merit by our actions life everlasting.

Compare with this the teaching of the Catholic Church. The holy and Œcumenical Council of Trent has put into a clear definition what had been taught from the beginning. According to that definition, justification is not the mere imputation of the justice or merits of Christ; not merely the forgiveness or overlooking of sins; not merely the favour or benevolence of Almighty God; but it is grace and charity which is poured into the soul by the Holy Spirit, and which becomes a part of the soul's condition, state and disposition. Thus we hold with the greatest certainty and joy that this sanctifying grace, merited by the Precious Blood of Christ, really "cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7);

that it "forgiveth our iniquities and healeth our diseases" (Psalm cii. 2); that by it we become "holy and unspotted in His sight in charity" (Ephesians i. 4); that we are made by it the temples of the Holy Ghost, according to those words of St. Paul: "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? . . . for the temple of God is holy, which you are" (1 Cor. iii. 16); and again: "Know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, Who is in you, Whom you have from God!" (1 Cor. vi. 19). We believe, moreover, that when we are thus justified and sanctified, we receive what may be called a "clean heart and a right spirit within us" (Psalm l. 12); that the three great Christian virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity, are either bestowed upon us or made to live again, and that we have thus the power of doing works really pleasing to God and of meriting life everlasting. This is truly being "born again." The sanctification of a soul by grace is a grander work than that soul's primary creation. It is now able to live and act in a sphere which is entirely above its nature; to progress in another plane, altogether more spiritual and august than that of the thoughts, words, and actions of merely human and earthly activity. It does not drop or discard its human virtues when it has put on its supernatural robe of adoption; it cherishes them the more; they borrow from the glory of its new state a brightness and a value which they could never have had without; and

a man who might have been temperate, honest, kind, brave, and continent without the grace of Christ—although not for long and not in difficult circumstances—lifts these human virtues into a region of divine halo when he is, in the Christian sense, a "child of God" (Romans viii. 14), and a "participator of the Divine nature" (2 Peter i. 4).

It is true that Sanctifying Grace, whilst taking away the guilt and pollution of sin, does not take away all the effects of sin. Concupiscence, or that proclivity to sin which came with Original Sin, still remains. Neither does it destroy those inclinations and tendencies which have sometimes been set up in human nature by our own actual sins, and which are called bad habits. But neither a bad habit —as long as it is not yielded to in thought, word, or deed —nor concupiscence as long as it is resisted—is sin. Grace enables us to resist; and the spiritual conflict of grace against nature, which goes on during the whole life of the Christian, is the Christian's glory—whilst at the same time it is the object of the constant solicitude of Christ, and the price of the crown which He reserves for His soldiers.

The nature of Sanctifying Grace and of the justification and sanctification of a redeemed soul, being thus made clear, we come to consider the way or manner in which such grace is come by or acquired. For it is evident that there must be some means of knowing whether we have grace or not. We cannot expect that an Angel of God will be sent down to

announce to each of us that we are children of God. As the Christian dispensation has been established in the world by Jesus Christ to enable the world to profit by the fruits of His Precious Blood, that dispensation must contain some provision for intimating with reasonable certainty how and when a soul is justified.

It is, perhaps, needless to dwell upon the Catholic teaching in detail. We hold and teach that the infant, as yet without the use of reason, is sanctified by a ministerial act done by men, but made efficacious by the institution of Christ. This is holy Baptism. As regards those who have come to the use of reason, we distinguish two classes: first, those who have never been baptized; and, secondly, those who, after baptism, have fallen into grave sin. The first are reconciled and justified by Baptism, as infants are; the second by the Sacrament of Penance. But in both cases this most important point must never be lost sight of—that no human being, with the use of reason, can be justified and sanctified either by Baptism or the Sacrament of Penance without mental dispositions and acts on his own part. "He who created thee without thy co-operation," said St. Augustine, "does not without thy co-operation justify thee." It is not now the moment to enumerate one by one the different interior dispositions which must precede the valid or the fruitful reception of the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance. It is only necessary to lay emphasis upon this—that neither

of these two Sacraments, nor any Sacrament of the Catholic Church, can be described, as they are often described by non-Catholics, as a mere mechanical process, like a charm, or the use of a fetish. A man who, against his will, should be submitted to the administration of a sacrament would derive no sanctification from it, and the administrator would commit a sacrilege. A man who should be baptized without turning away from and detesting his sins, if he had sinned, would remain as estranged from God as before. A man who went through the ceremony of confession and had the priest's words of absolution said over him, without faith, hope, the detestation of sin, and all those dispositions requisite for removing obstacles to the infusion of grace, such as a firm purpose of amendment and of avoiding gravely dangerous occasions—such a man would be only mocking Almighty God, and would add another sacrilege to his load of guilt.

Another most important observation must be made. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is not confined to the channels of Baptism and the Sacrament of Penance. A man may be justified without either of these Sacraments, but on two conditions—first, that he sorrows for his sins with a sorrow which is grounded on and inspired by perfect love of God; and, secondly, that he has the wish and readiness to approach such Sacraments were it in his power. For Almighty God, although He has given to His Church as the ordi-

nary means of grace and sanctity, the seven holy Sacraments, never rejects the honest and sincere conversion of any heart among the souls so dear to Him. Let them cry from the depths, or from the desert, from the trackless sea, or the lonely mountain top, He bends His ear to them and answers their petition. But they must desire, at the least, to approach His Sacraments, for these are part of His ordinance, set up in the world by One Who "knoweth our frame," and Who appoints for men the observances and commandments which are best suited to make them humble, to give them light, and to lift up their hearts to Him. And this is true of the whole Christian Dispensation. God can deal with every soul individually and separately. Often and often He does so deal with them, turning to them like a Father whenever they turn to Him—yea, preventing, stimulating, strengthening, comforting them, from the morning till evening, and in the dark hours of the night. But He has established His Church, His unbloody Sacrifice, His priests, and His Sacraments. No one may exempt himself from the ordinances of the New Covenant. No one may cut himself off from the flock, or pretend that it is better for him to be outside the sheepfold. No one may despise what the Lord has appointed. There may be noble rivers by Damascus, but it is only the waters prescribed by the Prophet that will wash away the leprosy of the sons of men.

The real truth is, that the Sacramental institution, far from having the effect of reducing religion to a superstitious and mechanical observance, is just the wisest possible institution for stimulating and bringing into exercise every spiritual faculty a man possesses. What are the things which keep us all away from God? They are our sloth (or religious indifference), our pride and our self-indulgence. A Sacramental religion—such as among the religious bodies of this country the Catholic Church alone pretends to be—is the only religion which could successfully meet such spiritual shortcomings as these. To use a Sacrament, you must bestir yourself; you must be up to the day and the hour; you must take the trouble to look into your own heart and to number your evil deeds—a thing which human nature detests, and detests so deeply that hundreds and thousands of men and women never think over their past sins, and never really know their sinful state, but live in a fool's paradise—until the judgment sits and the books are opened. No one can practise the Catholic Sacraments without coming to know his sinfulness, and desiring to take practical means to cease from sinning. Then, secondly, it is an axiom of the Christian religion that a man cannot be truly a Christian without becoming as a little child; that is, without accepting many things, submitting to many things, and practising many things, which a man's sense of his own consequence, and a certain natural desire to be his own guide and master, would urge

him to resist or pass by. The natural man dislikes being tied to days and hours, to making one of a crowd, to asking permission, to saying "I have sinned." The natural man enjoys having a vague religion which reverences God at a distance, but dislikes attendance at Church, kneeling down, praying, and taking means to correct one's faults. But none who practise the Catholic Sacraments can help coming near to God—sincerely, practically, personally. A man who prepares for the Sacraments turns away from sin, and in numerous ways lifts his heart to God. A man who receives the Sacraments urges himself to piety and devotion; if ever he is fervent, he is fervent then. And, lastly, there is that lax and self-indulgent temper and disposition which is at the root of every sin man commits. Is it not evident—and do not all Catholics know it?—that the practice of the Sacraments makes us reckon far more carefully with this dark and evil propensity than if our religion was entirely within our own bosom? No man can go on with Confession and with Holy Communion and not think twice and thrice, where he would otherwise have hardly thought at all, before gratifying his passions and appetites.

And here nothing has yet been said of the grand and powerful sacramental Grace itself. For the Sacraments of Jesus Christ, although they are unfruitful without certain dispositions on the part of the recipient, yet, when worthily received, bring to the soul grace and benediction that can in no way

be measured by those dispositions. They purify, they illuminate, they stimulate, they strengthen—drawing the soul nearer and nearer to God, increasing the love of God's Commandments, making it easier to follow in the footsteps of Christ, and increasing the dread and the horror of sin. And among their precious fruits not the least is that fervour and spiritual activity which accompanies and follows their actual reception. For all of us who have been in the custom of approaching the Sacraments can testify that it is at those moments that we pray better, more continuously, and more fervently than at any other time; it is then that our regrets are most vivid for living a life unworthy of our Heavenly Father; it is then that our purposes are most generous, and our hearts most tender to Jesus Christ.

And, in the face of all this, we are to be told that our Sacramental belief makes our religion a superstition—to hear it called unspiritual, gross, and mechanical; to sit silent when we are described as priestridden, slaves to forms and ceremonies, ignorant of what it is to go directly to God! Such language is the result of sheer ignorance of what the Sacramental system is. But would it be too much to ask our friends to take the trouble to inform themselves? It is not a part of Catholic defence to bandy words and to throw accusations back. But it would be easy to show that the want of the Sacramental system leads to contented self-sufficiency on the one

hand, and to fanatical superstition on the other. The non-Catholic is seldom disturbed in his sins. The claims of respectability may sometimes urge him to reform his public excesses ; the vehement words of a preacher may rouse him to believe he is saved. But most probably no one teaches him to ask pardon for his past ; and his "conversion" is pretty sure to leave unaffected many secret and cherished propensities which are quite as bad as those he professes to renounce. He knows nothing of the childlike spirit of the Gospel ; on the contrary, he criticises, chooses, condemns, and pronounces, through all his life ; whether it be the Church or the Bible, the preacher or the neighbour. He keeps his religion to himself, and, as he says, allows no priest to step between himself and his God ; but this too often means that he is too uninformed to know God as he might know Him, that he reads his Bible wrongly, if he reads it at all, that he prays very little except in public, and that his religion is sentimental, vapourous, and adapted to Sundays only. He professes that he is sure of salvation ; that he has found Christ ; sometimes going so far as to maintain that it is impossible for him ever to lose what he has found, or to fall away from acceptance. This is the outcome of the spirit which derides the priesthood and despises the Sacraments. Let us imagine what would become of religion were all the world made up of men who proclaim themselves to be infallible judges of their own spiritual dispositions.

There should also be considered the immense dearth of Divine grace, which must ensue to those who do not acknowledge the appointed fountains of our Saviour's mercy. But let these words suffice; and let the fruit of them be, first, a desire to use the holy Sacraments; next, a dread of sin, which alone can rob our souls of the grace of Jesus Christ; and lastly, a desire to prove to non-Catholics, by our words, if possible, but certainly by the example of a good life, how grand and profitable an inheritance it is to possess the Catholic Sacraments.

V

CONVERSION

The process of Conversion ; God's help ; faith, fear, love—Why the Sacrament of Penance is needed—Conversion not merely the ceasing to sin—A Christian may be really converted and yet may again fall into sin—Conversion not necessarily accompanied by feelings of peace, joy, or fervour—Non-Catholic "conversions."

It will not be inopportune to continue and conclude the instruction on the subject of Christ's Grace and man's sanctification already begun.

In that instruction your attention was drawn to the errors of those who hold divine Grace to be a mere exterior imputation. Grace was shown to be truly a quality of the soul, imparted to it by God through the precious Blood of Jesus Christ—truly possessed by the soul, really sanctifying it, and enabling it to acquire, by its works, genuine merit unto life everlasting.

It can be clearly understood, from these considerations, how great a difference there is between a soul with Grace—that is, in the state of sanctifying Grace—and a soul destitute of such Grace. The moment in which man's spirit passes from deadly sin—whether original or personal—to sanctifying Grace, must be the moment of a new creation. When Almighty God, in the beginning, said "Let

there be light"—or even when His creative Word called the material universe out of nothing—He did not do a more wonderful thing than when He floods the human spirit with the Grace acquired for man by his Redeemer. It will be well for us to make a study of that most interesting moment; to try to understand what share we ourselves have in bringing it about, and how far we are aware of what is happening—how far we feel and are conscious of the happy change—when we are thus favoured by our heavenly Father.

The passing from the privation of Grace to the possession of it—from spiritual death to spiritual life—may, with a certain correctness, be called Conversion. It is evident, however, that the word Conversion has not altogether the same meaning as Sanctification. Conversion primarily signifies an act, or several acts, on the part of man himself; Sanctification means the work of God in the soul. Still, it is true that there can be no Sanctification or Regeneration without Conversion; and we will now consider what Conversion really is.

Conversion, which is frequently in holy Scripture called Repentance, is nothing else than a sincere turning to God, with detestation and hatred of our sins, accompanied by a firm determination to change our evil life and reform our bad conduct. This description, which will in a moment recall to memory a thousand passages of the Old and New Testaments, is brief in words but pregnant in meaning; and it touches on doctrines of vital moment, which false teachers have attacked, and for which the Catholic

Church has fought, in ages past. For, if you will observe, Conversion, thus understood, must include four or five intelligent and spiritual movements, each connected with the other, but all more or less distinct. The first thing that happens is, that the sinner is stirred by the Grace of God. That Grace is a certain Divine stimulation of the heart and will, without which repentance is impossible. It does not act mechanically, as when a lever is applied to a heavy weight; it does not destroy or suspend a man's free-will. Unless we, on our part, accept, embrace and co-operate with the solicitations and promptings of our heavenly Father, they are as useless for spiritual profit as the winds which sigh round men's houses in the night and in the morning have left no trace. "Turn to Me and I will turn to you," is the appeal made by God to sinners (Zacharias i. 3); as if the great God of Heaven would respect and wait for the free act of His creature. Then, if His words are heard, there comes from the depths of the sinner's heart that cry which acknowledges his dependence on his Maker's mercy, "Convert us, O Lord, to Thee, and we shall be converted" (Lamentations v. 21).

The next element in the process of Conversion is Faith; belief in those things which God has revealed, trust in His promises, and confidence in His power to justify the sinner "by His Grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans iii. 24). Faith is followed or accompanied by Fear—a fear of

the terrible justice of God, and of the just judgments with which He must visit wilful and unrepented sin. But fear must not extinguish humble Hope. "Is it My will that a sinner should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should be converted from his ways and live?" (Ezechiel xviii. 23). "Turn to the Lord your God; for He is gracious and merciful, patient and rich in mercy" (Joel ii. 12). Finally, the sweet and lovely flame of Charity begins to tremble in the heart; kindling slowly and faintly, but growing brighter and stronger as the heart follows the Grace given; a Charity to which the attributes of God are one by one unveiled, as consideration and thought go on; a Charity which is first turned to His sovereign justice, then to His holiness, then to His majesty, then to His fatherly love, then to His infinite perfection. And thus the hatred of sin is complete and the return of the Prodigal to his heavenly Father is accomplished.

A question may here be asked by non-Catholics which requires an answer. If this, they will object, is the process of Conversion, what need is there of the Sacrament of Penance? What can a Sacrament do more than bring into the soul faith, holy fear, filial hope, and divine love?

No Catholic would hesitate what to reply. It is true that, as is constantly repeated in Catholic instructions, conversion may be full and complete, and the soul may be justified, even before the Sacrament of Penance is resorted to. For all that, the Sacra-

ment is absolutely needed. The Catholic Church believes that it is Christ's command that all grave or deadly sins, whether already pardoned or not, be once at least confessed to the Minister of God. This ordinance is capable of ample justification; but, for the moment, it is sufficient to say that salvation would be exposed to dangerous uncertainty if every man was allowed to decide for himself whether his dispositions were sufficiently perfect to wash away his sins without the Sacrament. And this leads us to the second point in the reply. It is this—that the Sacrament has power and efficacy to forgive even the deadliest sin in cases where the penitent's own dispositions, although good, would not of themselves suffice to obtain such forgiveness. Think, for a moment, what varying degrees of intensity may be found in the emotions, desires, and resolutions of the human heart. One man's fear is light, his hope is feeble, his charity is weak, his resolution is newborn, without roots or substance. Yet he does fear God, hope in Him, and love Him, and has a genuine purpose not to offend Him again. Another man has a much clearer insight, and a grasp of interior truth much more firm and fast. He may have corresponded better with the Grace given him. He may be better instructed. He may have taken more time and pains, concentrating his thought and putting pressure on his will power, as a man can so well do when he really means to do it. Finally, there may be special circumstances which make his re-

pentance full and fervent. Two things, then, are certain: first, that dispositions, however good and right in themselves, may be too imperfect in degree to wash away mortal sin; and secondly, as we have said, that the same group of dispositions, if sufficiently intense, and accompanied by desire of the Sacrament, will certainly accomplish this object. It hardly requires the Church's authority to make the mind accept this doctrine. It is the only view of human nature, and of God's majesty which can be reconciled with the teachings of the Bible. This being so, let us observe the mercy of Jesus Christ. The new Covenant was to be a dispensation of "grace and truth"; of a more abundant grace, and of a real, and not a mere ceremonial, efficacy. Among other things, forgiveness of sin was to be easier. The strayed sheep was not to be required even to walk back to the fold, but was to be carried home on the shoulders of the Good Shepherd. The great majority of men and women are, it must be sorrowfully admitted, those in whom fear, faith, and love are weak and remiss. Unspiritual, indifferent, distracted, and tempted, they may perhaps turn to God; nay, if they are practising Catholics, and live in the frequentation of Church, altar, and instruction, they will be almost sure, from time to time, to endeavour to shake off sin and serve God better. These are they on whom God has mercy in the Sacrament of Penance. Their dispositions, when they approach the sacred tribunal, must be genuine,

even if feeble. No good, but the contrary, will come to the soul that confesses its sins without any sorrow for them. But if the dispositions exist—and Catholics are instructed to take great pains with them—the august Sacrament of Penance joins itself to them, and by the Blood of Christ, the priest's absolution washes away the guilt of sin. "Whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven them" (St. John xx. 23). There is one further remark. The Sacrament of Penance not only forgives the mortal sins of those who confess with due dispositions. It also forgives the innumerable lesser sins of frailty, inadvertence, and ignorance into which even the just man falls many times in the day; it forgives them if they are confessed with repentance. And it does more than remit these sins, called "venial." It is a great Sacrament of the New Law, charged with the grace of Christ—and it carries with it to the soul of the Christian a wonderful strength to overcome temptations, a strong light to recognise moral evil wherever it is found, and an abundant grace to heal the wounds which sin has made in all the powers of the soul. Thus, it is the practice of pious Catholics to approach the Sacrament of Penance, not merely once a year (as they are commanded to do), but many times in the year, even every week, or every month. Were there even no question of the sacramental grace of this powerful Sacrament, yet it would be an occasion of practising many of the

most august of the virtues taught us by Christ—such as humility, obedience, childlike simplicity, and the love of God. "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know these things? For the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk therein" (Osee xiv. 10).

Let us now draw one or two consequences from what has been said, and so make still more clear the true meaning of Conversion. First of all, Conversion is not merely the ceasing to sin. It was part of the erroneous blustering of Luther to proclaim that there was "no Penance like a new life"—meaning, that if you reformed, there was no need either of repentance or of the Sacrament of Penance. This was solemnly condemned by the Church. For sin leaves stain and guilt upon the soul—a stain that must be washed away, a guilt that must be atoned for. It is true that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has atoned for all the sins of the whole world. But that atonement can only be efficacious to those who turn to God by faith, regret, hope, and love. Otherwise, all men would be always in a state of salvation, neither prayer nor good works would be of any use, and a man might live in the practice of every crime without putting his salvation in the slightest peril. The penitent of old cried out, "I will recount to Thee all my years, in the bitterness of my soul" (Isaias xxxviii. 15). It is thus that acknowledgment of sin, and sincere sorrow for the past must always accompany Conversion.

Next, it is equally evident that a Christian's re-

pentance and conversion may be real and sincere, and yet that he may afterwards again fall into mortal sin. Conversion does not root out our evil propensities, or abolish pride and passion, or destroy our spiritual enemies. When temptations again arise and we do not correspond with our grace, then there is a fresh fall; once more evil is preferred to good, and man turns his back upon his Creator. It is true that if such relapses are frequent and without excuse, they raise a presumption that the conversion has been fictitious and unreal. There is a great danger, here, for those careless and indifferent Catholics who use the most sacred ordinances of their religion without serious thought or serious effort. When men and women who come to confession fall again and again into the same sins—and deadly sins, too—then they may fear that their repentance has been no repentance at all, and that what they said to God or to his priest they never meant. But still it is certain that even if a man falls a hundred and a thousand times, he will still be forgiven if he truly repents. And fall again we may, and very possibly we shall. No man can be absolutely sure and certain of his final perseverance in good. Let us therefore live in holy and salutary fear, and let us take the greatest pains, not once only, but over and over again, to renew our detestation of sin, and to turn more and more effectually to God. "Say not, I have sinned and what evil hath befallen me?" (Ecclesiasticus v. 4).

Finally, it must be plainly understood that true Conversion of the heart is not necessarily accompanied by any strong or marked feeling of peace, joy, or fervour. We must carefully distinguish mere feeling from solid determination and a mind made up to serve God. Religion is not feeling. Our feelings are not always at our command or under our control. But, with God's help, we can always use our free-will and be determined to live and obey Almighty God. This is true religion. Sometimes our feelings help us to do this, and sometimes they hinder us. When they help us it is much easier to be good; but when they do not help us, we oftentimes gain more merit. When a man is really repentant and converted, it happens not unfrequently, perhaps generally, that his repentance is followed by much peace and serenity of conscience, and that he experiences great consolation of spirit. But we must beware of considering these effects as the essential part of Conversion; for a man might have them without being converted at all. What is called "Conversion" in religious organisations outside of the Catholic Church is often feeling and nothing more. We have all seen or heard of such conversions. A man has led a sinful life. One day he finds himself listening to a powerful preacher—or perhaps experiences some great shock, in which there seems to be a certain divine intervention. Then, suddenly, the whole current of life and thought seems to be changed; he hears Jesus call-

ing, he knows he is forgiven, he feels as if he never could offend God again. And this is accompanied by peace and joy, and by an excitement of feeling which sometimes impels the newly converted to confess, to sing, to shout, or to leap. There is no need to deny that such "conversions" take place. For all that is good in them we may thank the Holy Spirit, Who by no means confines His prevenient and awakening grace within the boundaries of His Catholic Church. Men may be permanently changed for the better by them. But true Conversions they are not. First, there is no real repentance for the past. Next, there is no resolution to avoid sin, and the occasions of sin, for the future. Thirdly, there seems really to be no active use of one's own will towards God at all ;—no begging for mercy, no holy fear, no homage, no acts of love. There is only the surrender to an impulse ; the heart is caught on the crest of a great wave of feeling, and it seems as if it were being lifted to the heavens. But it is more likely to be flung high and dry upon the barren sand. For the feeling recedes, the emotion dies down, and then, perhaps, things go on just as before. Even if they do not—even if there is a real change, all the past remains unrepented of, and all the future is at the mercy of impulses, similar in kind, some contrary, some divergent, but none of them guided and controlled by the faith, the fear, the hope, the obedience, and the prayer which are taught and enforced by the traditions of the true Church.

Around us, belonging to one or other of the many forms of religious opinion which claim to be called by the name of Christian, there are numberless hearts which from time to time truly turn to God and long to give themselves wholly to His service. But they live in a generation which has lost the true Christian tradition. Not that any genuine cry of the soul will ever be, or can ever be, disregarded by our heavenly Father, from whomsoever of his creatures it may come. But one fugitive cry is not enough. Every man has a past. Again, every man's life goes on with added moments and accumulating responsibility to that mark on the dial of time which is fixed for its limit. Life is concerned with many things ; the powers and impulses of man are various and complex ; help must be had against temptations, questions of right and wrong must be answered, falls must be reckoned with, spiritual hurts must be repaired, and God's commandments must in all things be obeyed. Conversion is concerned with all one's past, and all one's future. No man can, in these most serious matters, be his own guide. The most learned of men cannot in these things pretend by their own light or study to guide other men, or even themselves. There is no way to firm and secure belief, to solid and genuine conversion, to safe and trustworthy perseverance, except to place one's self within that great school of divine illumination which has dominated the past and which claims the attention of the world at present, in the one true Church.

VI

HOLY BAPTISM

Early ideas of "cleansing" by water—Baptism in the Church of Christ—First effect of Baptism, regeneration; second effect, membership of the Church of God; third effect, the "character" or seal.

THERE are several reasons which seem to make it useful and appropriate at the present moment to speak on the Sacrament of Baptism. First of all, Baptism is becoming more and more neglected in the non-Catholic world around. Next, it is unhappily true that amongst ourselves, although (thanks be to God!) there are but few Catholic parents who do not bring their children to the font, yet a very large number seem almost without ideas as to what are its effects, its sacredness, and its importance. Moreover, there is so much Catholic doctrine bound up in this most sacred rite and Sacrament, and implied in the due understanding of its history and its place in the Church's system, that no pastor should omit to bring it frequently before the attention of the Christian flock. By the study of Catholic dogma and of Catholic practice we strengthen into convinced and loyal Catholics. By the neglect of that study our Catholicism grows thin and poor, and we

become liable, according to the expression of St. Paul, to be blown about by every wind of doctrine. For many Catholics lose their faith by their ignorance.

Christian Baptism took its rise in the command of the Lord Jesus. "Baptize them," He said to His Apostolic band, in that moment when He gave the whole world into their charge, and bade them "make disciples" of every creature. But the ceremony itself, as a ceremony, was of older date. How old it was cannot be certainly known. It is certain that a tradition was widely spread throughout the heathen world, that the ceremonial use of water signified purification and cleanness of heart. Both the East and the West had their sacred fountains, their holy streams and rivers; and the people saw in the element of water the abundance of a life-giving outflow which both purified and fertilised the earth. Water, no doubt, especially in hot and dry climates, is a natural symbol of life and purity. But it would seem that, from the very beginning, there were religious associations implanted in the human race, which can hardly be explained except by assuming that God, in His primeval revelation, allowed man to understand that water was to be the agent of a higher life and a deeper cleansing than anything that nature could afford. The Prophets of Israel, as they foresaw Christ's dispensation, foresaw also the outflow upon the sinful earth of the spiritual water prefigured by so many rites and usages. Thus

when Ezechiel was shown, in a great vision, the new Temple which was to be built after the Captivity—a figure of the Christian Church—he was brought by the Angel to the great Gate; and behold, water issued forth from under the threshold of the door, and ran down by the right side towards the east; and as the prophet walked further and further towards the east—the symbol of Jesus Christ the Redeemer—the water was deepened as he went, until at last it was a torrent which he could not pass; and the Angel said, "Every living creature whithersoever this torrent shall come shall live" (Ezechiel xlvii. 1–9).

The ceremony of Baptism by water, having been ordained by Christ Jesus and raised to the power and dignity of a Sacrament, at once from the very beginning of Christianity took a most marked place in the outward life of the Church. You hear of it repeatedly in the New Testament. The multitudes whom Peter's great sermon converted on the day of Pentecost were baptized. The illustrious minister whom Philip the Deacon instructed as he sat with him in his chariot, finished by going down into the water with his teacher and receiving baptism. Saul, who was afterwards St. Paul, after those terrible three days of darkness, fasting, and spiritual agony which followed the vision of Jesus near Damascus, rose up at the touch of Ananias and was baptized. When Peter was called to the house of the Roman officer Cornelius, and had preached to all present

Jesus of Nazareth, the Holy Ghost, anticipating His own Sacrament, fell upon them, and Peter immediately commanded them to be baptized. The progress of St. Paul through Macedonia, Greece, and Asia Minor, is marked by the names of those he baptized. The good and rich Lydia, with her household, at Philippi, the Keeper of the prison in the same city, who was converted with all his house at the miraculous earthquake, Crispus, Caius, and Stephana's household at Corinth, and the disciples at Ephesus, who had already received John's baptism, seem to have been baptized by St. Paul himself; but all were baptized. "For," as he said to the Corinthians, "we are all baptized into one body, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free" (1 Cor. xii. 13).

As the faith of Christ spread over the world we see Holy Baptism becoming by degrees a feature of public and civil life. In the ancient paintings of the Roman Catacombs is represented, not only the administration of the Sacrament, but the consecration of the baptismal water. The sacred and mysterious festivals of Easter and Whitsuntide were specially set apart for general Baptism. During the weeks which preceded these feasts, the young people and the newly converted—who were called Catechumens —were carefully instructed by the clergy in the articles of the Christian faith ; and the very earliest versions of the Creeds occur in the descriptions of Holy Baptism which have been handed down in the

writings of the Fathers of the Church. The minister of Baptism, on these public occasions, was the Bishop himself. On Easter Eve, especially, was its administration attended with the greatest solemnity. Then, after the Paschal Candle had been lighted, signifying the risen Christ, and after the evening hours had been spent in finishing the instructions of the neophytes, and in disposing their hearts to penance and the love of God, the Bishop, with the great Light borne before him, went in procession to the Baptistery, invoked the Divine Spirit in measured liturgical formulas upon the water in the Font, and joyfully conferred the Sacrament of regeneration on the new flock of Christ's little ones. As the Church grew in power and influence she built her great Churches, and each Church had its Baptistery, sometimes a splendid and beautiful building standing apart, as at the Lateran in Rome, at Florence, and at Pisa, testifying by its precious marbles and its symbolical adornments to the importance attached in those Christian ages to the great Sacrament of faith and unity.

1. The first effect of Holy Baptism is the regeneration of the soul. In this is implied one of the most tremendous mysteries of God's dealing with man. Regeneration means the being born again. It is our blessed Lord's own description of the power of Baptism. As He went on to explain, it means not natural, but spiritual birth. Yet the word "birth," and the expression "new birth" are

both most deeply significant. They signify, and they are used to signify, that the soul before Baptism and the soul after Baptism are as different as death and life. It is true that the unbaptized man lives, and his soul lives. That is, he moves, speaks, and acts, and his soul thinks and reasons. This is life; these are the acts of life. But it is not this kind of life our Lord speaks of. He always taught —and His followers believe—that there is, for men and women, the possibility of an entirely different life. He was not referring to "life everlasting." Neither did He allude to what is often called in these days a "higher life"—meaning a life of pure practice and exalted motives. What He meant was, a real change in the human soul, enabling it to move or act in quite a different plane or sphere—as if we took a four-footed creature from the earth's surface, and gave it the means of traversing the fields of the air. It is not easy to describe this new kind of life —this change in the soul brought about by Baptism. But the kind of life which belongs to a creature may be gathered from that creature's acts and motions. Now the soul that is baptized receives by baptism the power to do something which no created nature could do by its own resources. It receives the power so to act that its acts merit the sight of God face to face. Perhaps you are not struck as much as you should be with that thought. Then consider, that the sight of God face to face—the Beatific Vision—is something so absolutely God's own, that it is as

far beyond all your natural effort as it is out of the reach of a stone to see light. God could have shown Himself to you in infinitely varied ways, as a universe of beauty and bliss, with innumerable gradations of pleasure and happiness. But not face to face!—unless He gave you a new faculty, a transformed nature, a supernatural endowment. This He has actually given—and He gives it in the Sacrament of Baptism. Was not our Divine Lord justified in calling this a "new birth"? Is not the "regenerated" soul a new creation? When the water is poured and the words ordained by Christ are uttered, then there lifts up from that soul, as a mist lifts up, the state of sinful darkness, and there flows all over it and through it the glory and brightness of the Redeemer's sanctifying grace; so that as long as it is in that state nothing is required but that mortal life should cease, for it to stand in the presence of that God Whom none but those so privileged can look upon and live. All this is what we learn in our childhood, when the catechism is explained by the ministers of God. But there are too many amongst us on whom this grand Catholic Dogma, this revealed expression of man's high and proud destiny, makes but little impression, whether in youth or in maturity. How different would be the life of a Christian did he hold a living faith in the teachings of his Baptism! Baptism is a living witness that he has an immortal soul. In these days when it is not uncommon to hear the very existence of the soul denied, it is good for men

to have this reminder. Sunday by Sunday, in our churches, the little child is carried by anxious hands to the font, the priest of God appears, the mystic rite is gone through, the holy words pronounced, the white garment delivered; and the spirit of man feels the presence of the Deity. Because it is all so simple —because it is so usual, so commonplace—those who assist recognise with awe the hidden powers of the blood of Christ, and are conscious that One mightier than the angels is behind the veil. The soul of the little one has been carried into the torrent that rushes from the heavenly Jerusalem; and now, during its sojourn upon this earth, its noblest duty will be to preserve the purity which was given by that Baptism. Carry it forth, my brethren, and remember that it is precious. Parents, guard it from harm, and impress upon its opening sense the knowledge of its destiny, and the value of its inheritance. Priests of God, seek it out and watch it as a shepherd watches the lambs of his flock. Christians, whoever you be, respect and reverence that child of God. Hold your hands and put restraint upon your lips, that neither evil deed nor evil word may harm that soul which is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Let it grow up in the word of faith, in the love of Jesus, in the familiarity of the holy Sacraments. Let all outward things, all bodily concerns, all the interests of life in the world, as long as life shall last, be nothing when set against its own immortal expectation. Let time be its treasure to spend for heaven, the earth a tent it

must strike in the morning, and death the door of its everlasting rest. Are these, dear children in Jesus Christ, the ruling thoughts of our hearts—the guiding light of our uneasy lives? Who can say that they are? Yet they follow by the strictest consequence from the fact of our Baptism.

2. The second effect of Baptism is that it makes us members of the Church of Christ. The holy Fathers, in describing Baptism, sometimes use words which signify initiation into a secret society. Such phrases take us back a long way—to the times when Christians were marked and hunted creatures, forced to distrust all men, and accustomed to hide in the very earth itself. The Church is no secret society. She would live in the light of the sun, and preach her doctrines from the house-top. But these words of initiation, of association, show in the clearest way that she *is* a society. A man who is a Catholic is by that very fact a nearer and dearer friend of all other Catholics than even of the members of his own household who are not Catholics. In those early times of persecution—as in later times also—the faith of Christ and the Sacrament of water drew men and women together in a body which was unlike every other human association. Christ was the Head of that body, and Christ, though He was afar off in the heavens, was always present by His Spirit, the Paraclete. His word was present because His Church could not err in teaching. His Precious Blood flowed always, because He had instituted the

Sacraments, by which, as the Council of Trent says, all true righteousness either begins, or is increased, or is regained when lost. His Eucharistic Presence drew around one table all the children of His household. Ranks and degrees of spiritual jurisdiction provided for order and external worship. It was through the Church that the grace of the Redeemer and His help towards eternal life were given to the soul of man. He has made exceptions, and He continues to make them, for Grace is sometimes given outside the Church; but this must be the rule, as long as it is true that there is but "one faith" and "one baptism," "one fold and one Shepherd." To be indifferent to the Church, therefore, is to be indifferent to Christ, and to deny one's Baptism. There is, perhaps, no point of Catholic teaching which is more bitterly spoken against by non-Catholics than our belief as to the necessity of belonging to the fold of the Church. But why is there so great an objection to the Church? It is not so much that she claims authority in teaching; for many non-Catholics see that the multitudes *must* be taught, or they would never arrive at a coherent religion of any kind. It is rather that the non-Catholic mind rejects *sacramental* religion. A religion with Sacraments, as Sacraments are taught in the Catholic Church, is a religion which teaches the real cleansing of the soul and definite repentance for definite sins; which is not content with inculcating a vague reliance on Christ, but specifies times for

prayer, inculcates efforts of mind and will, and imposes humbling bodily practices. Nothing of this is necessary, or indeed possible, to those who hold the grand Protestant tenet that human nature, being utterly corrupt, can do nothing good even by grace, and that therefore there is no use to do anything but to trust to Christ. Holy Baptism brings the soul into the fold of the Good Shepherd, Who takes the strayed sheep on His own shoulders and carries it back to the flock; but Who also heals it, cures it, and sets it once more in the place of pasture, to live with the life He has given it. Baptism, rightly understood, marks the difference between those who believe in true regeneration, real justification, sanctifying grace and supernatural merit, and those who reduce all Christ's work to the covering up of nature's foulness, without taking it away; between those who believe in a visible House of the Lord, with its ministers, its altar, its table, and its home-like brotherhood, and those who wander in the wilderness, each one pretending to make out his religion for himself. Holy Baptism should make the soul of the baptized man sensitive in its loyalty to the Church which Christ has acquired by His blood; faithful to her precepts, brave in standing up for her, scrupulous in avoiding every communication with non-Catholics which may cause scandal or in the least degree indicate indifference.

3. There is one other effect of this most holy Christian Sacrament which must here be mentioned.

St. Paul says that in Baptism Christ "hath *sealed* us, and given the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. i. 22). And in other places he speaks of the *sign* which the Spirit of Jesus places upon us in His Sacrament. This sign or seal is a spiritual mark or "character," really and actually impressed upon the soul. By it we are marked for Christ's. We now belong to Him and to no other. To Him, and to Him alone, must we live, move, think, speak, and act. Other masters may claim us, and may bid for our service, but we may not listen to them. We have renounced them. It is part of the sacred ceremony of our Baptism to renounce the three chief enemies of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have pledged ourselves against the flesh; we have rejected the Devil; we have turned our back upon the World. In renouncing the flesh, which signifies the unlawful desires and inclinations of sensuality and passion, we have taken upon our shoulders the great Christian principle of self-denial, which Jesus Christ calls His "yoke." No man or woman can be worthily called a Christian who does not practise self-restraint. Man is endowed with the human gift of reason in order that he may judge and compare and make his choice. To a Christian, there can be no difficulty in knowing what the choice must be. The difficulty lies in the effort that must be made. But Christ's soldiers make it. Look at the world's history. Has not the baptism and signing of Christ's followers purified, regenerated and saved the human race? Has not baptis-

mal renunciation forced back the tide of evil which unchecked nature was pouring over the earth's surface? Now, as heretofore, all Christians are called upon for self-restraint; the rich, lest their fulness merit hell-fire hereafter; the poor, that they may endure till the Lord comes; all men, that they may live for their souls, and not for their bodies. By the renunciation of the Devil was signified in the old times idolatry and paganism, with all their corruption; in our days it means the spirit of pride and disobedience which urges men to question God's word, to sneer at revelation, and to think and act entirely at their own discretion. For the soldier of Christ marches in the ranks of Christ. Independence of judgment in religious matters leads a man into the pathless wilderness, where there is no water, and where the bones of deserters lie who have followed the spirit of Lucifer instead of the spirit of Christ. When we renounce the World we utter our defiance to that strong and subtle demon which is far more dangerous than the Prince of Devils himself—the spirit of human respect. This enemy of Christ leads men and women to be ashamed of their Divine Master; to pray by stealth, to hide their faith, to smile approval at heresy, to sin for vanity's sake, to covet and envy, and to fear the empty words of foolish mortals more than the threats of the eternal God. The baptized soul has promised to fear God and God alone. By the holy sign of Baptism he is bound to the Gospel of his Saviour. In the strength of

that sign he searches that Gospel, and he finds there humility, meekness, poverty, obscurity, obedience, suffering. He is not ashamed in the midst of a world which despises them, to profess the virtues of Bethlehem and Nazareth. Thus the Christian becomes the salt of the earth, the leaven of good in an evil world.

It appears from all that has been said that we should learn from the study of Holy Baptism to live for religion, and to bring up our children to live for religion. Baptism is no idle ceremony. There is the touch of God in it. There is the Blood of Christ in it. The baptized soul can never again be as if it were not baptized. That which has been imparted will remain, either for recompense or for judgment. If we want a thought and a motive to lift us up from the engrossing claims of daily life, we have it here, dear children in Jesus Christ. If we would live with modesty and dignity, let us remember our Baptism. If we would cast off sin and its habits—drunkenness, sloth, and impurity—let us remember that we are baptized. If we would encourage ourselves to frequent the house of God, the angelic feast of Christ's Body, the cleansing Sacrament of His forgiveness, let us think of the obligations of our Baptism. If faith is sometimes hard to flesh and blood, if the world's temptations are strong, if the cross on our shoulders is heavy, let us recall the day of our dedication—the day on which we were signed with the sign of our Master.

For when our life is over, that sign will be our warrant for a happy eternity. When time is at an end, and all this world has passed away, with its conflicts, its achievements, its empires, its vicissitudes, one thing will stand erect in the silence and the stillness. The Cross of Christ will stand—and every soul which bears that sign will enter with Christ into His Kingdom.

VII

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

Penance a Sacrament wonderfully suited to our human nature —How it has been practised from the earliest Christian times—How effectively it has guarded the Church against errors about sin, reconciliation, and grace—Contrition, its nature and efficacy; its relation to the Sacrament; how profitable to practise it.

In this instruction I would draw your attention with the utmost possible earnestness to that great Sacrament in which the Precious Blood of Jesus is applied to the forgiveness of sinners—that is to say, the *Sacrament of Penance.*

The Seven Sacraments are seven gifts of Jesus Christ, left to us to make up for His going away. "Ascending on high," says the Psalmist, "He led captivity captive; He gave gifts to men" (Psalm lxvii. 19). They are gifts which are so very personal to Himself that they seem to be almost equivalent to His personal presence. The Blessed Eucharist, indeed, does give us His true and real presence. But every one of the Sacraments seems to be as it were the touch of His own Hand. For although the human minister of a Sacrament is a real minister, yet the inward Sacramental grace does not come to us from the minister, but from Christ Himself. No

one could make or institute a Sacrament except Christ. The pouring of water, for example, or the anointing, which, together with the due form of words, constitutes the Sacramental rite, would have no efficacy to reach the soul and the spirit, were it not that Christ Jesus, who is true God and true Man, has given them this efficacy, and has willed that the ceremony should be more than a ceremony, and should carry with it the power of the Blood of Calvary.

The Sacrament of Penance differs in a most striking way from the other Sacraments. In all the Sacraments the minister holds the place of Christ; but in that of Penance, the priest seems to be Christ Himself, the Healer of the sinful soul and the Judge of the transgressor. As St. Chrysostom magnificently says: "The seat of a king is on the earth; that of a priest seems to be in heaven itself; for the priest administers things that are of heaven. Who is it who says this? It is the King of Heaven Himself. Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven. What dignity can equal this dignity? Here the heavens depend upon the earth; here the judge sitteth on the earth, but the Lord followeth His servant, and whatever the minister pronounceth below, that the Lord holdeth ratified above."—("Homilies on Isaias," cap. vi. 1.)

The grand mystery of the reconciliation of the

sinner with the God Whom he has offended can only take place where the sinner turns back with tears and good resolutions to the presence of Him, on Whom by sin he contemptuously turned his back. This interior and spiritual return might have sufficed had the human race been other than it is—infirm of purpose, fickle, and dependent on the material things of earth and sense. But because man is as he is, therefore the Lord and Saviour, Whose dearest desire it is to mutiply the fruit of His Precious Blood, founded a solemn institution which was to take its place among the grand facts of the external and visible world. The Sacrament of Penance is part of the visibility of the Church herself. Like all other visible ministries in spiritual things, it is intended to remind the heart of spiritual truths, to stir up the will to spiritual acts, and to intensify those interior dispositions without which external service is of no avail whatever. Being a Sacrament, it does much more than this ; but it is not too much to say that even without the sacramental efficacy, the institution of the Sacrament of Penance would be full of the wisdom and beneficence of God, Who knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are dust (Psalm cii. 14). To draw sinful men to Christ the Healer, to humble them before Christ the Judge, the Christian priesthood have been endowed with a character which stands out in the whole history of the Christian Church, and which may be gainsaid and objected to, but cannot be ignored. From the earliest

days of the Gospel of Christ we find the Bishops and Priests of the New Law receiving the confession of sins, adjudging penance for transgression, and pronouncing the forgiveness of God. In these first ages there was no talk about the priest coming in between a man and his Maker. Let us cite a passage from St. Augustine, the greatest authority of the Primitive Church, in which he not only implies the sacerdotal power of absolution, but shows incidentally what Christians thought of their priests in the days of the persecutions. He is urging upon all pastors the duty of remaining at their posts even in times of danger. The time of persecution, he says, is the very time when the flock stands most in need of its priest. "Then is the time when all ages and both sexes flock to the church, some begging for baptism, others imploring reconciliation, others again to submit themselves to penance; whilst all require consolation and the ministry of the Holy Sacraments" (Ep. 180, *ad Honoratum*). In this passage the word "reconciliation" is used for what we should now call "Absolution." It is the same thing as St. Cyprian and the great African Church of the third century called, sometimes "Peace," sometimes "Communication," "Pardon," or "Indulgence;" to be "admitted to peace" was the phrase of this great Doctor for what we should call receiving the sacerdotal absolution. The word absolution is actually used about the same time by Tertullian, who also has such expressions as "Pardon," "Remission"

and "Cleansing," and who calls this ministry the "return home to the peace of the Church"—a beautiful phrase, fully descriptive both of the effect of Penance, and of the Church's share in its external ministration. For many centuries the Latin Church has used the word "Absolution," whilst the Greeks, as may be seen in their rituals, employ a term meaning "solution," or "loosing." The special discipline of the Sacrament has altered as the centuries have passed by. At one time the public confession of grievous faults, even of those that were secret, was approved, if not enjoined. About the beginning of the eighth century we see that secret sins had no longer to be confessed publicly to the Bishop, but only in private to the priest, whilst for the Bishop's jurisdiction were still reserved notorious and scandalous crimes. With the early Fathers the priest is more commonly looked upon as the healer of the stricken soul, but from about the eleventh century the judicial view of the Sacrament began to prevail; the priest is a judge, the confessional is a tribunal, and the penitent must present himself as one guilty, to acknowledge his sin and to be loosed from it and from its consequences. But whilst one or other of these views has at various times received greater attention, neither of them has ever been lost sight of; and the Roman Ritual, which every priest uses in the administration of the Sacraments, has these words: "Let the Confessor above all remember that he bears the character of both judge and

physician ; that he is the appointed minister at once of the Divine justice and the Divine mercy, that so he may act as an arbitrator between God and man, unto the glory of God and the salvation of souls."

Thus the Church of God, which is a city on a mountain, visible to the whole world, stands before all men as a witness to sin, to repentance, and to justification. In various generations there have been various errors on the subject of sin. Errors on such a subject must be specially fostered—so one would be inclined to think—by the enemy of mankind ; for there is none so deadly to the human soul. Let a man commit sins as red as scarlet and as numerous as the sands of the shore, if he recognises them to be sins and if he believes in the mercy of God, there is hope of his salvation. But the wicked spirit has done his best to poison human knowledge and belief, in order to make repentance impossible. First, there were those who declared that a sinner, once fallen, had no further hope of salvation. Whatever he did was henceforth of no avail. He might pray, he might fast, he might undergo every kind of penance—he never more could call God his friend. This doctrine disturbed the Church in the third century. One sect denied that the more grievous sins could ever be pardoned ; others refused to recognise absolution given to those who had fallen from the faith under persecution ; others, again, maintained that no mortal sin could be forgiven. For three or four centuries the Church, by her Pontiffs, her Councils and her Doctors, upheld

before the human race the truth that the redeeming Blood of Christ is mighty enough to wash out every stain and to rescue a repentant sinner even though seventy times seven times he may have given himself up to spiritual death. Then came heretical teachers who would fain have destroyed the whole supernatural order; who refused to admit that God rains his graces on man, or that man's nature requires the help or healing of our divine Saviour. The great and visible system of the Church's penitential ministry preached, more powerfully even than the words of St. Augustine himself, the necessity of the touch of the hand of Christ for the reconciliation of the sinner and the perseverance of the just. In later days there arose the heresies of Luther and of Calvin. They are powerful still, and their teaching is deeply ingrained in all Protestant practice. On one point they virtually agree; they distort and pervert the meaning of sin, and therefore of spiritual justification. They teach that human nature is sinful all through, and that sin is merely human nature. With them, and with large numbers of those around us at this very day, nature even assisted by grace is incapable of virtue, and can only produce sin—a corrupt fruit of a corrupt stock. Thus they look upon sin as a disease, as a natural growth, as an inconvenience, as a thing to be ashamed of, as an offence against law and order; but as a turning away from the Creator and as the death of the spiritual soul, they regard it not. Never was the Sacrament of Penance so neces-

sary as now. Never was the upholding of that great Sacrament so needful to the well-being of the true religion of Jesus Christ. It is not so long since the blight of Jansenism fell upon a large part of the vineyard of the Lord. Its effect was to keep sinners from the Sacraments, by impressing upon them the difficulty of obtaining mercy. But the Church of Christ once more stood to the defence of the Sacrament of reconciliation. She cried aloud, by the mouth of many a Pope and many a Saint; and she made men recognise the compassionate Heart of Jesus under the forms of the Sacrament of healing and of judgment. Against all these pestilent and destructive falsehoods the grand witness of the Church has been made, and continues to be made, by means of the Sacrament of Penance. By it she upholds the reality of sin, the reality of reconciliation, the reality of sanctifying grace. By it she maintains the true nature of man's fall on the one hand, and of his restoration to righteousness and the capability of merit on the other. Against mere naturalism, mere humanitarianism and mere secularism all the world over, this great Sacrament continues to preach the spiritual destiny of man and the infinite mercy of God. What is it that we everywhere see? What is it that is signified by the confessionals in our Catholic churches, by the purple of the priest's stole, by the seat of judgment and consolation wherein he sits for long hours? What mean those devout crowds which throng round the humble tribunal

where the mighty power of the Keys is exercised? Why, in the cold and dim hours of late evening or early morning, do men, women and children succeed each other, passing in from the busy streets to pray in silence apart and then to bow their heads before a fellow-sinner like themselves? Because they have sinned; and because they are turning to Christ for forgiveness and fresh strength; and because in their self-questioning, their sorrow, and their resolutions, they recognise that all they do is helped and intensified by this marvellous provision of Christ for their spiritual needs. For it brings their good desires to a head when they are aroused to make their way to the Church; it puts shape into their vague regrets when they have to look at their sins one by one; it is wholesome to them to undergo the discomfort of preparing for confession; and the whole process, by disturbing their selfishness and putting them through various humble and childlike actions, deepens their humility of heart and throws them (as all acts do which are against our ease and comfort) more and more completely into the arms of that God for whom they make the sacrifice. Confession does much more for the soul than this, even without taking into account that which is principal in it, namely, that it is a powerful grace-giving sacrament. But there can be no doubt of its moral and spiritual significance. A Christian who goes to confession has quite a different view of that awful spiritual fact—the fact of sin—from him who after indulging the tempers and the passions of his youth and his maturity, settles down

to forget them all, and is prepared to meet his Judge without an effort after sorrow, without any thought of expelling from his soul the leprosy of years, and without any further self-restraint or amendment than may arise from departed opportunities or extinguished passions.

It is not necessary in this place to dwell upon the manner of preparing for the Sacrament of Penance, or the method of making one's confession. But having pointed out the significance and the character of this most sweet and consoling sacrament, it will be well for us to say a word on that which is most essential in it, namely, Contrition. For the Sacrament is, as it were, the precious alabaster box of Magdalen, in which is enshrined and preserved the priceless balsam of that spiritual disposition which is the saving of the souls of men—that is to say, of true and sincere sorrow for sin. Contrition, or sorrow, is not only the most essential element in our preparation for the Sacrament of Penance; if it be sufficiently intense and thorough, it obtains for us the forgiveness of the very blackest of sins even before we approach the Sacrament at all—provided we intend or desire to confess at least our mortal sins. For what is Contrition? It is that turning of the heart to God, with love, sorrow, and the determination to do better, to which God has promised His forgiveness. "Turn ye to Me, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn to you"—(Zacharias i. 3); that is, turn to Me with sufficient sincerity and resolution, and I will forgive you—

nay, I must forgive you. Thus, it cannot be doubted that many persons are justified before Confession. But they must always go to Confession as soon as possible, for it is the will of our Lord that all mortal sins, even if already forgiven by perfect Contrition, shall be mentioned in the sacred tribunal of the Sacrament. But some may ask—If our sins, even the worst of them, can be forgiven by Contrition, what is the use of the Sacrament of Penance? The answer is, that it too often happens that our Contrition is very far from perfect. We are like the poor lost sheep—which wanted to belong to the flock again, but could not get up and go back; so that it waited for the Good Shepherd to place it upon His shoulders and carry it home. What happens with most of us? We want to get rid of our sins, but this desire is not very fervent; we turn to God, but chiefly perhaps because we are afraid of His judgments; we do repent of having offended Him, but our love of Him, like a fire that has just been lighted, has little warmth in it. In a word, we have determined to give up sin, but we have not yet thrown ourselves with all the fervour of our hearts at the feet of our Heavenly Father. This is not enough to wash away our sins, but it is enough to move the mercy and generosity of the Good Shepherd. These imperfect dispositions are sufficient for the Sacrament — and the Sacrament does the rest. When we approach, we ought certainly to try to make our contrition as deep and as perfect as possible. But even if human frailty

prevents us from attaining to this perfect contrition, still, provided we are really sorry and are resolved to avoid mortal sin for the future, we are sufficiently disposed. The Good Shepherd, when He comes, finds us lying far from the flock; but at least there is no resistance in us; there is willingness to be helped; there is the beginning of love; there is the fear of judgment and of hell. Then He stoops down, and whilst His minister the priest pronounces the holy and blessed words of absolution, He lifts the poor sheep upon His shoulders, and in an instant it is once more in the midst of the Heavenly Father's flock.

How profitable, how necessary, how divine, is the practice of sorrow for sin! The Catholic Church teaches that human nature, though wounded by original sin, is not corrupted or destroyed; that in Baptism and in other ways its guilt is really taken away, it is regenerated, justified, and clothed with the divine robe of sanctifying grace. This beautiful vesture is, in its turn, destroyed and lost by a fall into mortal sin. In order to regain it, the soul must repent and turn back to God; and this is the reason why holy Contrition is so necessary in the life of every Christian. It is necessary not only to restore his soul to sanctifying grace, but to preserve it in grace. No disposition so effectually restrains the tempted heart from fresh sins as true, deep, and constant sorrow for past offences against God. "Wash me yet more—yet more from my sin"—(Psalm l. 3)—was the cry of the penitent King. That bitter sorrow had penetrated into the

inmost recesses of his being. It was that sorrow which saved him. Never again did he turn his back upon his God. All through his life there ran the dark shadow of the day in which he had stained his soul with crime. God had forgiven him; but he could not forgive himself. And that piercing regret seemed to keep him nearer to his God. It gave intensity to his love, it added reality to his reverential fear, it filled his being with a feeling of God's presence—the God whom he had rejected, the God who had forgiven him, the God whom it was now his desire to serve with the truest service all the days of his life. And when we reflect upon the influences which sorrow for sin brings into our spiritual life, it is not surprising that it should prove to be so strong a refuge, so safe a fortress, to infirm and tempted human nature. For contrition keeps us in sight of the awful judgments of God. These judgments are not far off. Eternity is near, and hell-fire is near. When men turn away from God, they forget this. They blindfold their faith, they drug their very reason, and they sin. What is there that can rouse them from their indifference, and make their faith live again? The thought of the awful hereafter. Not for ever will the Lord be mocked. Not for ever will He hide His face. Not for ever will He hold His hand. It is He who is the Almighty, reaching from end to end, in strength and in wisdom absolute. The little scene of this mortal life will be played through soon; before many years it will all be swept away. Then

begins eternity; and for sin, eternity means the Abyss. It is this abyss which contrition keeps within its view. The penitent sinner sits near the barriers of the eternal prison, as in ancient Jerusalem the people of the Jews sat near the wall in the place of mourning and wept. "Pierce my flesh with Thy fear" (Psalm cxviii. 120). Moreover, Contrition keeps the Christian soul in sight of the Cross of Christ. It is most certain that it was our sins—even ours—which were the cause of the Passion. They caused it twice over; for first, it was to let us see how infinitely He detested sin that Christ suffered as He did, and, next, these very sins were the means and instruments of His most acute suffering. That tender compassion which innocent, unworldly souls feel, almost without effort or reflection, at the thought of the sufferings of Jesus, is a most precious grace, which prepares the heart for every kind of union with Him. Such compassion may not be equally possible to all. But where the heart is hard, the will, at least, can do its best. A little meditation—a habit of earnest thought, will bring the Cross from out of the darkness, so that we grow to see it more clearly and to understand it better. Assiduous prayer in the presence of our suffering Redeemer is the most sure means of keeping near to God in thought, in word, and deed. To pray with Him in the garden of Gethsemane is to join in His horror for all the sins of the world; to pray in the presence of the scourging at the Pillar is to feel what the sin of impurity brought upon Him; to pray with His

thorn-pierced Head before our eyes is to conceive the deepest detestation for all the pride of nature; and to pray with the Crucifix in hand is to hear a sermon from every wound of His sacred Body on the burning zeal of the Sacred Heart to save us, always, and for ever, from all guiltiness, all stain, all foolishness, and to make us His and wholly His. Finally, contrition brings us within sight of the infinite Goodness of God. Holy, mighty and eternal God! It is Thou at last whom Thy poor creatures strive to smite when they yield themselves to sin! Pure and perfect Contrition rises to the contemplation of that absolute beauty, that undimmed brightness of the everlasting Godhead, which for ever and ever exists without change or shadow of alteration. All the sins of the world—all the sins of a thousand worlds—can make no difference to the mighty God who reigns because He exists, and Who exists by His own sovereign prerogative. Before man stood upon this earth and exercised his free will on the things of earth, God was God in all the effulgence of His being. After man shall have ceased to be, and the fire has cleansed the earth of the sins of a thousand generations, God will be as He has always been—the Good, the Perfect, and the Eternal. But meanwhile men and women will have lived their short lives, to die the eternal death. Men and women will have blinded themselves to God, and to His goodness, to His power, to His eternity, and wrecked their immortal life by turning against Him who holds all things in the hollow of His hand! Contrition fills

the heart with thoughts like these. Contrition leads men to pierce the skies with their faith, and to understand who it is that their sins offend. Contrition scatters the mists and the falsehoods of the earth, and holds the wavering thought and will in the awful Presence of man's only good and only sovereign Lord, infinite in all perfection, and infinite in the holiness of His being.

It is contrition of this kind that we should strive for. Such contrition is the strength of our spiritual life and the pledge of salvation. Meanwhile, if we fall short of this, there is always the Sacrament of Penance. Week by week, or month by month, should we bend our heads beneath the uplifted priestly hand which holds the healing of Christ. Week by week, or month by month, should we rouse ourselves to note our sins, to lift our hearts in sorrow, and to renew our promises to our heavenly Father. No man should stay long away from the Sacrament of peace and pardon. Every man knows his frailty and his natural indifference to spiritual things. But every man may cling closely to the Good Shepherd. Every man may bring his sins to His Saviour, and may confess them; and by confessing them may glorify the Precious Blood, bring balm and consolation to his own spirit, and prepare himself for that day of Christ when nothing (save only sin) can come between him and the certainty of his Father's love and of his Father's welcome to eternal bliss.

VIII

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

Variations of British Protestantism on the Real Presence—The objective Presence clear from St. Paul and the earliest Fathers ; admission of this by the Unitarians—Why the word Transubstantiation was adopted—Its defence depends upon the meaning of the word Substance, and on the real difference between a substance and its appearance—What word would non-Catholics substitute for Transubstantiation?—The Catholic view of our Lord's Eucharistic Presence cannot be called "gross" or "sensuous."

The central mystery of Catholic devotion and of Catholic public worship is without doubt the Blessed Eucharist of Christ's Body and Blood, commonly called the most holy Sacrament of the Altar. As we draw nigh to God by Jesus Christ, so we approach Jesus, in worship, in love, and in the participation of His redeeming grace, principally by the continual Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Holy Communion. At the present moment, this great Christian ordinance is undergoing much discussion among those who are not of the Catholic faith. It is well known to all, that when the so-called Reformation was effected in this country and on the continent, the leaders of that movement at home and abroad were by no means all of one mind on the subject of the Real Presence.

Into the definition of the various views of these heretical teachers it is not our purpose to enter at this moment. It need only be said, that in one direction they approached Catholicism, and in another they tended to the utter denial of any objective Presence whatever. The divergence here referred to has been extremely marked in the Anglican Established Church, and in British Protestantism generally. From the time, now nearly three hundred years ago, when the Anglican divines of the time of Elizabeth and Charles II. set themselves to make out a reasonable case for established Anglicanism, down to our own, there have been some Anglicans who have upheld a Eucharistic doctrine which had at least a Catholic sound about it, and others who have steadily denounced Mass and Eucharistic worship as superstitious and idolatrous. The Tractarian writers of fifty years ago gave a powerful impulse to what they claimed as Catholic doctrine ; and it has come to pass that there is, at the present moment, in the Anglican body, a considerable section who loudly proclaim the Real Presence, even while most of them largely misrepresent it. In the opposite camp are the great majority of the Protestants of the country, who emphatically profess their adherence to the views which certainly prevailed among the men who composed the Anglican Prayer-Book and organised the Anglican Church.

Both for the instruction of the Catholic flock, and for the benefit of any earnest Anglicans whom these

words may reach, it will be well to set down, as simply as possible, the Catholic teaching on the Real Presence, and some of the consequences of that teaching.

It is difficult to understand how any Christian who, in any sense of the word, respects and accepts a teaching Church, can refuse to believe in a true objective Presence of our Lord in the Eucharist. If anything in Church History is quite clear, it is that the Bread and Wine of the Supper were *never* regarded by the Church as mere Bread and Wine, but were looked upon, even from Apostolic times, as at least holding or containing the virtue and power of our Lord's Body. St. Paul wrote his account of the Last Supper not more than twenty-five years after it took place. He says that any one who partakes unworthily is "guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord," and that such a one does not "discern the Body of the Lord"—that is, recognise it. (1 Cor. xi. 27, 29.) Now, the Unitarians, who deny that our Lord is God, reject the inspiration of Scripture, and consider all the supernatural elements in the New Testament to be legendary inventions, bring forward this very passage of St. Paul to prove that St. Paul was inventing. They point out that these expressions most undoubtedly convey a "sacramental" meaning —that is, they mean that the elements of the Bread and Wine had a supernatural power. They contend that such a thing is impossible, yet that St. Paul most certainly asserts it; hence they conclude that

St. Paul, like St. John and the writers of the synoptic Gospels, was putting his own ideas into Christ's teaching. And they go on to say: "After this, the gradual construction of a complete sacerdotal system was only a question of time," and they quote St. Justin Martyr and Tertullian (both writers of the second century) to prove that, as early as that date, the Church held the objective Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.[1]

We have it, therefore, as the view of very learned and impartial non-Catholic students of the New Testament, who would fain, if they could, find their own tenets there, that the Apostles themselves, and the Church of the earliest times, taught what was equivalent to a Real Presence, and that succeeding generations only amplified New Testament principles. We may take it as certain, therefore, that St. Paul held an objective Presence, and that the Church from the earliest times interpreted St. Paul as so holding, and held the same herself. Who, then, originated the Protestant view, that the Eucharistic elements are only common Bread and Wine? and when did it arise? To ask these questions is to answer them sufficiently.

The discussions, however, on the Blessed Sacrament to which we are now more particularly referring, concern rather the manner of Our Lord's presence therein than the fact itself. But the expressions which are used, and the views which are put forward,

[1] See "The Seat of Authority in Religion," by Dr. James Martineau, p. 544.

among non-Catholics, indicate very clearly that whilst it is ostensibly the language or terms of Catholic doctrine that are attacked, it is, in most cases, really the doctrine of the objective Presence itself. The word which is most strongly objected to is, "Transubstantiation." Let us see, then, what Transubstantiation means.

We must remember that the Catholic faith is, that after the words of Consecration have been pronounced, it is right and true to say, of the things lying on the altar—of the (apparent) Bread or Wine—"This is the Body—this is the Blood—of Christ." Many non-Catholics will agree in thus speaking ; with those who utterly refuse to accept such a view we are not at present arguing. If, then, it can be truly said of that which was Bread just before, that it is now the Body of Christ, it is plain that the Bread has ceased to be there, and the Body of Christ has begun to be there, and that, by the utterance of the words ordained by Christ, the one has been converted into the other, whilst at the same time the appearances have not changed. It is this process—this miracle of the abiding love of Jesus—that a word has to be found to express. The Church has found a word which does so—and as there is no other change or transmutation on earth or in heaven which resembles the Eucharistic change, she has consecrated the word to that and that alone. The word is, Transubstantiation. We must carefully observe that this word was not invented to express anything new, fresh, or novel in doctrine. It was simply

made up for the purpose of stamping and fixing existing doctrines which one or two restless spirits had begun to call in question; just as the word "Consubstantial" was adopted by the Council of Nicæa to be a handy formula of the Catholic belief against Arianism, and the word "Theotocos" (which means "Mother of God") was formed to express the Church's faith in the unity of our Lord's person against Nestorius. Yet the word "Transubstantiation" is a very old word now. It came into common use before the Norman conquest of England—five hundred years before the existence of Cranmer or Luther. It means that one substance is changed wholly into another.

The word "substance" may perhaps require a little explanation. We do not know much about *Matter*. We know well that it is different from spirit, and to a certain extent we can see and express the difference. But as to what it is in itself, almost all that we can say is that a material thing and its effect upon our senses are not one and the same thing. Catholic philosophers have been accustomed to call the thing itself "substance," and its effect upon the senses the "accidents." This is not the occasion to enter into any subtleties of metaphysics. But the truth is that it is just because non-Catholics, generally speaking, refuse to allow any distinction between a bodily substance and its "accidents" that they exhibit such a strong repugnance to the doctrine of Transubstantiation. About two hundred and fifty years ago, there flourished in England a celebrated philosopher whose

name was Locke. He said there was nothing real in the world except the qualities of things—that is, the impression they produce upon our senses. He urged that it was a mere mental delusion to believe in a substance underneath these qualities, and causing them. He said, "If you show me a flower, I see colour and shape, I perceive fragrance, I am sensible of weight and solidity—and I defy you to prove that a flower means anything more than that." This writer has been followed by a large school in this country—and recent scientists, such as Herbert Spencer, have gone even further than he. The most popular philosophy in this country at the present moment holds that the world of things is made up of nothing but bundles of impressions. It is quite clear that a view of this kind—an *idealism* so positive and absolute—makes all belief in the Real Presence impossible. It is of no use to speak of one substance being converted into another substance, when your friends deny there is such a thing as substance at all. It is of no avail to explain that, by the words of Consecration, the substance of Bread ceases and its "appearances" remain, when your opponent believes that a substance is *nothing but* appearances. It is quite useless to prove from Scripture and the Fathers that our Lord's sacred Body is present without its "appearances," when you are met by the assertion that a human Body can never, even by the power of God, be separated from its appearances, because a body *is* its appearances; if the senses perceive nothing, then there *is* nothing.

The only excuse for entering into this, is, that it seems to explain why so many British writers and speakers refuse to accept Transubstantiation, which they contemn as a mere metaphysical speculation. But it is not so; it is only a plain statement of fact. It raises a plain issue: Is material substance only appearances, or is it something which underlies appearances, and in which the appearances as it were cling and rest? The true doctrine of the Real Presence requires us to accept the latter alternative. By the words of Consecration the substance of the Bread ceases to be and the substance of the Wine ceases to be, but the appearances remain. These appearances are called by theologians "the accidents"; but the Council of Trent carefully abstains from using that word, because the Council, in defining Catholic doctrine, did not want to go out of its way to impose upon Catholics any philosophical terms that were unnecessary. The "appearances" are called by the Council the *species*, which is a Latin word meaning exactly the same thing as "appearances."

These appearances, after the substance to which they belong has ceased to be, are supported and continued miraculously by the power of God; and it is by their instrumentality that the Holy Eucharist can be sacramentally administered. Meanwhile, a new substance has taken the place of the Bread and Wine, and that is the adorable Body of Jesus, with His soul and His divinity—for these things are inseparable. The God-man who thus comes upon our altars is not

visible or sensible; the "appearances" which His sacred body would naturally have are kept in abeyance; nothing of Him reaches the senses of men. Thus He has willed to throw a veil even over His Humanity, in order to be more easily and universally accessible to men as their God, their Redeemer, and their spiritual food.

Catholics might well ask those who reject Transubstantiation, what they, on their part, would substitute for it. The only words that Protestants have used to express our Lord's Presence in the Blessed Sacrament are two—Impanation, and Consubstantiation. The first of these they owe to the German Osiander. His view was that the Eternal Word united Himself hypostatically to the Bread, or the Wine, and assumed it just as He assumed human nature. This was mere speculative fanaticism, unsupported by scripture, by tradition, by philosophy, or by common sense. We may safely say that no one in these days troubles himself about it. But the word Consubstantiation—which was invented by Luther himself—receives more attention, and there are some Anglicans who maintain that it expresses that doctrine of the objective Presence which is permitted in the Anglican Church. What does it mean? Simply that, although in the Eucharist Christ may be present, yet the Bread is there too. But the very words of institution prove that the Bread and the Wine no longer remain. "This is My Body; this is My Blood." That is—the thing or substance

which now lies on the altar is—not Christ present *in* Bread, but—Christ; without any allusion to Bread at all. The theory of Consubstantiation has no support either in our Lord's own words, in the words of the Fathers, or in Church teaching; and, on the other hand, it is exposed to all the difficulties and objections raised by Protestants against Transubstantiation—and indeed to many more.

After the explanations here given, it is evidently mere ignorance on the part of any one to reproach Catholics with advocating a "gross" and "sensuous" presence of our Lord in the Holy Eucharist. The body of Jesus Christ, even before it was glorified—even when by His will it was subject to the buffeting of the elements and the contact of the just and the unjust—could not be called by such epithets as these. It was real corporeal substance—but most pure, most holy, most heavenly. After the resurrection—as indeed occasionally even before—we see that it exhibited those qualities which the power of God will, according to St. Paul, confer on the risen bodies of the just; for it penetrated material substance and passed from point to point instantaneously. But in the Eucharist, that sacred Body exists in a way which deprives it even of that visibility and sensible solidity which it exhibited to Mary, to Joseph, to Peter, and to John. Here, corporeal as it is, we find in its mode of existence many analogies with that of a spirit. It does not reach the senses of man. It cannot even be pictured by human imagination.

It has no points of contact with the physical universe. It cannot be divided or broken. It is in many places at once. It is whole and entire in each particle or point of the elements. What can be more refined, more opposite to grossness, more distant from any merely physical associations, than this presence of our Lord? What can be better adapted to be a memorial of Himself—accessible to all, sufficiently subject to the senses to excite our devotion, and to lend itself to our outward homage and to our reception, yet silent as inspiration, secret as divine grace, serene as a ray of heavenly light! Round this Presence the children of the Church gather, as did the Apostles on the mountain, in the desert, by the lake, in the cenacle, but undisturbed by time or distance, by physical wants and needs, by any apprehension of violence or hostility. He abides with us as He abode with Mary and Joseph at Nazareth, drawing our hearts and satisfying our devotion, whilst no hard toil or painful poverty presses on Him, and no Cross shows darkly in the background. He allows us to approach Him as He did Magdalen, and Peter, and John the beloved—and it is not in strange men's houses, it is not after long journeys, in the darkness of night, under the shadows of Gethsemane, or amid the terrors of Calvary that we are forced to seek Him—but we find Him in the silence and peace of the tabernacle, where neither pain can touch Him, nor ill-will affect Him; where all the memories of His blessed life from

Bethlehem to the Cross, from the Sepulchre to His Ascension, are felt in the silent hours of watching, as the storm and trouble of the departed day still throb in the calm of the evening hour.

It is certain that there is no force on earth that attracts men to the true Church of God so powerfully as the Blessed Sacrament. No Catholic but must rejoice when he sees, in non-Catholic bodies, interest, discussion, study and inquiry on this most precious portion of the Christian's inheritance. But it must never be forgotten that the Blessed Sacrament is in the hands of its own faithful children. It has no earthly voice, no earthly servants, no earthly heralds, except so far as priest and people speak for it and proclaim it. Therefore, it works its wonders in the world in proportion to the devotion of Catholics. What, then, ought not to be our earnestness, our devout frequentation of Mass and of Holy Communion, our love and our observance in all that relates to this most wonderful of the gifts of our Redeemer! Let us all enter into ourselves, and stir up our Catholic feeling, that so, both in the public worship of our Churches and in the private devotion of our own lives, there may be strenuous effort and sustained resolution to honour the Blessed Sacrament, and to make use of it, in accordance with the intentions of our Lord and Saviour Himself.

IX

FIRST COMMUNION

The reception of the Blessed Sacrament the condition of spiritual and eternal life—The child should be prepared for First Communion by instruction, and by gradual progress in piety, reverence, and refinement of thought—Children brought hurriedly to their First Communion too often never return to the Sacraments—The Council of Trent expects the parents to concern themselves with the child's preparation—The respective shares in this matter of the school, the priest, and the parents.

The Blessed Eucharist is God's great gift to men. It is, in the spiritual world, almost what providence is in the natural world. By providence is meant that continued activity of almighty power by which God, Who made us, continues to preserve us in being, sending food and all things necessary, from our birth till the moment of our death. In the spiritual world we were "created" when the Spirit of Jesus filled our souls with sanctifying grace. With that new birth began a new and a higher existence—a supernatural life, a supernatural activity and fruitfulness, of which the true glory and maturity will only appear in the world to come. It is to provide for this spiritual life that the Saviour of the world has given us the Eucharistic Presence. This is what He tells us Himself. "He that eateth Me,

the same also shall live by Me" (St. John vi. 58). "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you" (*Ib.*, 54). Life to those who partake—death to those who partake not! The spiritual life is maintained and goes on by means of the Eucharist. What food, and the healthful air of the heavens, and the benignant influences of earth, sky, and ocean are to the body and mind of God's creatures, that the Blessed Sacrament is to their supra-physical being. Take away that holy Gift, and it is as if a man were starved to death, or left to expire of thirst on the sands of the burning desert, or allowed to gasp his life away for want of the vital air. How many of those who believe in God and in Christ die the spiritual death because they neglect the Holy Eucharist! How many remain, even for years, under the power of sin, and therefore dead in the sight of their Judge, because they keep away from Holy Communion! There cannot be any room for doubt; the Blessed Eucharist is the condition of life and death.

No sooner has the Christian child come to the use of its reason than it is time to think of preparing it for the Table of the Lord. It bears, as yet, the unstained robe of that sanctifying grace which it received in the font of its baptism. This grace is life, and strength, and beauty. But it is a treasure which is exposed to all the perils of temptation. Therefore, no time must be lost in making that child ready for

its First Communion. But the preparation for such a privilege is not completed in a week or a month. Although the child should be instructed in what is needful for the Sacrament of Penance and admitted to Confession as soon as it is capable of real sin, yet it is not always that the Communion of Our Lord's Body can be given to it, even when its age would seem to warrant it. St. Paul has said that no one must approach this Table of Life unless he can "discern" the Bread that lies thereon (1 Cor. xi. 29); that is, unless he knows what the Blessed Sacrament is. This is a knowledge which cannot be imparted by mere words, or learnt as one would learn matters of secular instruction. Without trying to define the amount of "discernment" which is required, it may with truth be asserted that many children, in all the missions of the country, might be sooner and better instructed about the Blessed Sacrament. The fault, as far as there is a fault, lies with their surroundings, and to a considerable extent with their parents. In the school, and from the lips of the priest, the instruction is given in its due time. But before the mystery of the Eucharist can become a living and real conception to the mind, there must be a gradual progress in piety, reverence, and refinement of thought. The Catholic child should learn day by day to join its hands together and pray with childlike faith to its Father Who is in heaven. It should never hear God's most Holy Name uttered except with reverential awe. It should become

familiar with pious pictures and images, which will leave their impression upon its young imagination. It should hear of the Saints, and of the Holy Mother of God. It should be accustomed to the solemnity of the Church, where the Altar is, and should learn to watch, and by degrees to understand, what is done when the Priest of God, in his robes of priesthood, stands in silence before that Altar and utters the words which send him on the instant to his knees. These things the child hears of in the school, but if it hears them only there, it will with difficulty take in the idea of the Blessed Sacrament. Moreover, during all that time of opening and expanding intelligence, it should be gradually accustomed to self-restraint, to purity, to refinement in word and deed, and to a horror of sin in every form. Not only is the idea of the Blessed Sacrament difficult to implant in a child who is positively wicked, but the same is true of one who is uncared for, neglected, dirty, and left chiefly on the streets. It is evident that this must be so; for the young minds and hearts of such unfortunate children are harassed, sullied, and pre-occupied, and the thought of Jesus and His mysterious love must be as strange to them as to the savage. Where there should be a pious love of God there is a premature worldliness; where there should be innocence, there is a precocious knowledge of all that is evil; and where there should be the gentleness and self-respect of one who possesses an immortal soul, made to God's own image, there is too often a

coarseness and selfishness, a hardness and recklessness, which would be disgusting even in grown men and women. To prepare children of this kind for their first Communion as the pastor's heart would wish to prepare them, is impossible. Sufficient knowledge may be imparted to them, it is true, and by great exertions they may be brought to the Sacrament of Penance and kept in some degree of decent behaviour for a day or two, until the sacred ceremony is over. And it may be admitted that some of these neglected children display, to their spiritual instructor and adviser, a delicacy of conscience, and an appreciation of spiritual things, which are touching and surprising — such is the innate dignity of an immortal soul, and the power of the blood of Christ. It is also most true that all who make their first Communion, provided they are in a state of grace (as we may hope they all are), do receive the marvellous graces which the Blessed Eucharist is intended to bring to the soul of the Christian. But it is too probable that, for want of the preparation here spoken of, these graces will never be "stirred up." They will lie latent and useless in the soul, for want of that piety and that sense of God and of holy things which, as a rule, are not imparted by grace without the co-operation of pastors, parents, teachers, and surroundings. For grace does not work miracles; at least, we have no right to expect that it will; and whenever human and natural agency has its sphere of work, such

agency must be used. God giveth the increase, but, for all that, Paul must plant and Apollo must water. Therefore, the children who are thus hurriedly brought to their first Communion, without training in piety, and without seemly habits, are but little affected by the reception of their Saviour's body. The impression quickly fades from their minds ; they remain in their forlorn state ; too often they never come back to the Sacraments ; and they grow up, as temptation makes itself felt, to that life of sin and degradation for which their childhood was the preparation, and of which it was the prophecy.

Can nothing be done, dear children in Jesus Christ, to present the little ones of our Lord to Him more worthy of that food of life, which He bequeathed to them in the hour of His Agony? What they lose by not being prepared for their first Communion, they hardly ever recover in after life. For they rarely learn to make the Holy Communion their daily bread; they seldom acquire that habit of regularly approaching the Sacrament, without which, it may be said, it is impossible to avoid mortal sin. Hence it is not too much to say, that the greater number of those who neglect the Sacraments owe this fatal indifference to the way in which they made their first Communion.

It should be clearly understood, in the first place, that the first Communion of a child is a matter which concerns not only the priest but the parent. The Catechism of the Council of Trent says: "The age

at which a child should be admitted to Communion no one can better determine than the father, and the priest to whom it confesses; for to them it belongs to examine and find out from the child whether it has *acquired a knowledge of this admirable Sacrament, and whether it experiences a relish for it.*" (Part 2, par. 63.) These words, which are quoted from the most authoritative of the Church's books of instruction, are remarkable in more respects than one. The two qualities which are required in a child before it is admitted to first Communion are — Knowledge and Desire. These two expressions are exactly those which are used by the great St. Charles Borromeo in his instructions to his clergy. We have spoken on both subjects; that is, on the knowledge which a child must have before it is allowed to approach the Holy Table—a knowledge which, thanks be to God, every child can acquire at the proper time in our schools and from the lips of the priest; and also on that desire, relish, or spiritual feeling, which is also a most necessary part of the child's preparation —a part which, as has been said, is so frequently and extensively neglected. But let it be observed that this Roman Catechism expects the *parents*, as well as the priest, to make it their business to find out whether their child possesses this knowledge and this spiritual desire. It is to the deep shame of too many parents in these days that it must be confessed that to expect anything of the kind from them would be entirely out of the question. What do they know

about their children's heart and soul? What do they care about their instruction and their piety? How far have we drifted away from the position and the feelings of a truly Catholic flock when words like these read rather like a reproach and a satire than a serious admonition!

There are three agencies which are, in their degree, responsible to Almighty God for a child's preparation for its first Communion. The first is the Catholic school, where with patient skill the conscientious teacher impresses upon the child not only the sound form of words, but also, by judicious steps, the meaning and the bearing of those holy forms. If a child has been taught the mystery of the Eucharist slowly and gradually, without haste or harassment, and with winning piety and seriousness, that child is furnished for all its life with a great and precious possession; for such teaching is never forgotten. The second agency is the Priest—the Pastor of souls, who is a "debtor to the wise and the unwise," and to whom the preparation of children for their first Communion is a work that is dear to his heart. The priest knows the vital importance of a good first Communion. Hence, it is his great anxiety, in all his dealings with the little ones of the flock, to secure this incomparable blessing. It is to this he bids even the youngest look forward; by this he encourages the indifferent, and stimulates the pious; to this he directs his catechisms, his exhortations, his children's services. When the time

comes for more immediate preparation, he gathers the little candidates for our Lord's Table around him, and for many days gives them special instruction and preparation. And at length, on some holy festival, at a Mass which is made more solemn than usual by the beauty of the altar, by the devotion of the people, and by his own fervent words of final exhortation, he reverently administers the greatest of all the Sacraments to those who, when they have worthily received, may justly be called angels upon earth.

But all the zeal of the pastor is marred unless the parents also do their part. What they have to do has already been referred to. It is possible that many may have some reason to excuse themselves from the duty of examining the child's intelligence in order to pronounce if he is fit. Yet if they were duly instructed themselves, and if they watched over their children as they should do, this would not be difficult. But they are bound, at least, to do two things. First, they must see that the children attend the special instructions which are given to the first communicants. Is it not very hard upon the priest, and a proof of great indifference to Almighty God, when children are allowed by their parents persistently to stay away from and to neglect that very instruction which is especially intended to make them less unworthy and less unprepared for this, one of the greatest events of their lives? In the name of God, let parents, and especially mothers, do their best to

prevent this grievous misfortune. When they find out, either from its being announced in Church, or in any other way, that any child of theirs is to begin preparation for first Communion, let them take careful note of it, and let them at once make the boy or girl understand that they at least—the parents—are aware how great and important an event is coming on. Let them redouble their vigilance and their solicitude, and by firmness and kindness ensure that there shall be no neglect; otherwise, if the child misses its Communion, the guilt will be upon their souls. And how many do this? How many young men, especially, are found every year who have never made their first Communion? We may be very sure it was in great part the fault of their parents. In the second place comes the wider and more difficult duty of training up the child in piety and spiritual feeling, so that when our Lord comes, He may come to a heart that is truly able to give Him a welcome and an abiding dwelling-place. To speak practically on this matter, it is necessary to insist that parents keep their young children off the streets, and away from evil companions. This can only be done, as regards poor people, by taking a great deal more trouble than mothers generally take. But it is a trouble which, if they do not take, they will incur the anger and condemnation of God. They must take the trouble, first to give good example themselves, and secondly, to watch over their children. Children cannot be kept always in the house, and they must

be allowed to amuse themselves; and moreover, the mother is too often hard worked herself. But it is absolutely necessary if we would save our young people from that vice and degradation which begins in childhood with roughness, dirt, and recklessness, to have the children watched. Some means must be found out of doing it; an elder sister, or a neighbour may help; or the children may be entrusted to good compaaions; or sometimes they may be kept by the mother's side. But somehow or other, it must be done; because parents who cannot maintain a reasonable watch over their young families, have no business to have families at all.

Let us be persuaded that on the Blessed Sacrament depends our eternal salvation, and on the first Communion depends, in very great measure, all the communions of our lives. During this acceptable time of Lent, whilst we prepare for Holy Communion ourselves, let us think, each and all, how we can best promote good first Communions. Priests, parents, religious sisters, teachers, devout and charitable laity —let all be persuaded that there are few works of religion and charity so dear to the Heart of Jesus Christ as to instruct, but above all to watch, guard, civilise, and form to piety, the souls of those who are in the first stage of the momentous journey of their life; of those who must live for ever or be for ever dead, according as they use the Eucharistic Communion of Our Lord's Body, and on whose first and earliest partaking of that sovereign Gift so signally

depends each Communion of their lives—until that last one which ushers them into the presence of their Judge. May it be given to all of us to receive, in the last and terrible hour of our lives, that sacred Body of Our Lord, and may we learn in life continually to strengthen our faith and intensify our charity, that we may worthily welcome Him at our death!

X

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

Our Blessed Lord's presence in the Mass—How the Mass is a Sacrifice—How great are the fruits of the Mass, and how rich in grace to those who assist—Men's culpable negligence in staying away from Mass.

The Blessed Sacrament is the most marked and the most powerful means to which our Lord Jesus Christ has had recourse in order to keep men in mind of His coming and of His Passion, and to transform them into the likeness of Himself. The Mass is the continuation of the Sacrifice of the Cross. These things are the most serious and important matters with which the world can have to do; and there is no man who is not deeply concerned with them. On them depends the very life of the immortal spirit which we are carrying with us to the judgment-seat of God. On them depends a happy or a miserable eternity. On them depends the love and the blessing of our Father Who is in Heaven.

Consider, then, that in the most holy and august Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ there are four things: First, His Presence; next, His Sacrifice; thirdly, His Mercy; and finally, His Power.

The Mass, with which you are all familiar, is a solemn and beautiful rite. There are times and places when it is celebrated with the utmost ceremony and splendour; when the officiating Priest is surrounded by many ministers, when the altar is replendent with lights, flowers, and precious ornaments, when the symbolic incense expresses adoration and supplication, and when the Church's chant accompanies it from the beginning to the end. But even a quiet Mass celebrated by a Priest almost unattended, without music or pomp, is full of awe and attractiveness. The silent worshippers kneeling round see a Priest of the living God, with the impress of Apostolic hands upon him, and the sacred unction consecrating him to the Lord. Clad in robes of mystical significance, he stands before the altar of the Lord. He seems to be withdrawn from the world and common things, and his whole bearing is that of one taken up with the presence of the Unseen. He reads, in the venerable language of the Western Church, the psalms, the canticles, the prophetical and evangelical scripture, and the prayers which surround the central Eucharistic rite. Then his voice drops to a whisper and his hands are raised on high, and behold! the awful moment is in sight. A minute or two, and having bowed his head, he suddenly kneels in humble adoration; and then, rising, he lifts up for adoration, first the True Body, and next the Precious Blood of Him Whom the words of consecration have called down upon that happy altar. Then every head

is bent in devoutest worship, and every heart in which there is the faith, feels the presence and the influence of the Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world. Who could ever have hoped for such a dispensation as this! What prophet or saint, what angelic intelligence, could ever have foretold that the Lord of Heaven and earth would thus deign to dwell amongst men? The Incarnation itself was so wonderful an exercise of divine power and wisdom that it is fittingly called in holy Scripture "the great counsel," that is, the great plan, or scheme, of God (Isaias ix. 6). The Eucharistic presence is the carrying on of the effect and action of the Incarnation; for, just as the Child of Bethlehem, the Boy of Nazareth, and the Man of Calvary, reveals God to the heart and brings God near to man, so the Holy Eucharist keeps Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Calvary before every mind, and gathers all our senses and faculties into worship, love, and imitation. We cannot see Him; and yet our senses can take note of Him; for they know the moment at which He comes, they follow the ritual which surrounds Him, and they feel that the altar where the greatest of Sacraments abides, and the very Church which covers it, differ from any other table and any other Church. And whilst our very senses are deeply impressed with the signs and the circumstances of His most real Presence, our Faith takes a strong grip of all that we see and feel, and relying on the mighty word of a God Who cannot deceive, holds fast with unfailing devotion to a mystery which

brings so near to us the Redeemer of the world. The very coming and presence of our Lord in the holy Mass should act as a sanctifying force on all of us who live in the neighbourhood of a Church. No Catholic should ever forget Him. No one should be so busy or so indifferent as not to remember with an emotion of love that the holy Mass is celebrated so close at hand every morning of the year. Sinful acts and words should not be possible when the Altar of the holy Eucharist is so near. And if a Christian heart, troubled by temptation, harassed by the presence of sin, or hard pressed by the world's circumstances, longs to seek its Saviour and to pray for help at His feet, there is the Mass; let such hearts make their way to the Altar, and they will there find the crib of Bethlehem, the holy House of Nazareth, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Cross of Calvary—in a word, they will find Him Who says, "Come to Me all you that labour and are burdened and I will refresh you" (Matt. xi. 28).

But the holy Mass not only gives us the Presence of Jesus; it is also His Sacrifice. This word, Sacrifice, is one of the most awful and significant that man uses in his worship of the God of Heaven. For Sacrifice has its origin in God's supreme dominion over all the universe which He has made. In acknowledgment of this, the heart of man seeks naturally not only to offer to God its own interior adoration, but also to express that adoration by external signs. Hence the immutation or destruction,

by fire, by the knife, and by other means, of animals and inanimate creatures as a mark of man's duty to God. Sacrifice was taught to the human race by God's own revelation. In every age and all over the world it has been found to prevail. The sacrifices which belonged to the ritual of the Jewish people are well known. They were of many kinds, and were intended to offer to God worship and thanksgiving, to obtain His blessing and to make satisfaction for sin. It need not be said that the mere shedding of blood, or destruction of existing things is of no effect whatever in pleasing or propitiating Almighty God. It is the acts and aspirations of the heart alone that God can value or accept. The ancient Sacrifices were of no avail except so far as they came from the religious feeling, the devotion, and the obedience of God's servants. They were, moreover, intended to foretell and prefigure one great and all-sufficing Sacrifice that was to come—the sacrifice of Himself by our Lord Jesus Christ upon the Cross. When that supreme moment arrived, then the world and humanity did at length offer to the majesty of God both adequate worship and complete satisfaction for sin. For what was the Sacrifice of the Cross? It was not the driving in of the nails, or the lifting up of the innocent Victim, or the pouring forth of the last drop of His blood. It was the act of His Sacred Heart offering these things to the heavenly Father. That divine Heart had been beating for three and thirty years before

the time came for Calvary; and the very first of its Acts would have sufficed to atone for the sins of ten thousand worlds. But He willed that His Heart should produce innumerable Acts, each of them intensified by suffering, each of them affected by the Cross that was to come; and He willed that His life's offering should culminate in an action which was at once the acutest suffering, and the most solemn outward expression of all that the world owed to its Creator. It is this action which is perpetuated in the Mass. For what takes place in that grand and chief mystery of Christian worship? The Heart of Jesus renews Its stupendous offering day by day, to the consummation of the world. We have, in the Mass, what was the principal thing on the Cross—that is, the Act of homage and propitiation made by the Man Christ Jesus to the supreme Creator—an Act of infinite value because the Act of a Person Who is truly God. We have, moreover, a reproduction even of the Cross itself, the nails, and the bloodshedding; for when the Lord Jesus Christ, by the words of consecration which His minister pronounces in His name, places Himself upon our altars under the separated forms of the bread and the wine, it is as true and real a Sacrifice as if He bled and died once more. It is not now a physical death; but it is a figurative bloodshedding and a true mystical death. By the Mass, therefore, Calvary is renewed unto all generations and in every region of the earth. Can any one who loves Our Lord

remain indifferent when this stupendous mystery of our religion is renewed each morning at his very door?

The next point to consider—and it is a most important one—is that Our Lord and Saviour would not have established this perpetual renewal of Calvary in our midst, had He not intended that it should have the most momentous bearing upon our eternal salvation. His purpose may be described in one word; it was to bring the fruits and efficacy of the Precious Blood home to every single Christian soul. For the Cross, infinite as its power is, does not necessarily save any one of us. We are not saved as you would rescue a log from the water. We cannot be saved without action on our own part—that is, without repentance, amendment, and the love of God. The awful scene of the Crucifixion took place once, in the darkness, before a few spectators, in a remote corner of the earth. In order that it may be renewed to the universal world and to every age, we have the sacrifice of the Mass. The Mass, therefore, is a most extraordinary proof of God's love and mercy. When He was dying, with body all bruised and heart utterly broken, He cast the glance of His dim eyes over the great human race, in all its centuries and generations yet to come. Fain would He have had all His people with Mary and John and Magdalene gathered about that seat and centre of His loving redemption, that the drops of His Precious Blood might have fallen upon them and they might have found His forgiveness. But that was impossible. Therefore He had

already taken the means to plant the whole world with His Cross. Wherever there was a priest, there was to be the renewal of that scene of mercy. Wherever there were men and women, He was to be crucified afresh. The daily life of the world was to be transacted in sight of the Cross; to the busiest of men it was to be so near that they would have only to turn their heads to behold it; the pursuit of pleasure was to be interrupted and checked by it; trouble, sorrow, and temptation were to find it always at hand; and it was to be a perpetual rebuke to the effrontery of sin and the evil working of the enemy of mankind. This was what the mercy of Jesus intended. When we look around us, and remember how slightly we ourselves regard this great act of religion, and how little it has to say to our business or our pleasure, can we escape the terrible suspicion that perhaps we are among those "enemies of the Cross of Christ" (Phil. iii. 18) of whom it is pronounced that their end is destruction? O God of mercy and compassion! Thou art ever longing to draw near to us, and we are ever refusing to accept Thy gracious clemency! Thou dost exhaust the resources of Thy power and wisdom in order to live in the midst of us, and we turn our back upon Thy invitation and live for the world and for sin! Change our hearts, O Lord Jesus, and make us henceforth understand the value of the holy Mass!

For we must remember that the power and value of the Blood of Jesus in the Mass is great and manifold. In itself, the Mass is of infinite efficacy,

because it is essentially the act of a Divine Person. And, therefore, every Mass appeals to God with a power and acceptableness which partakes of the prerogative of Him Who is its principal Offerer. But, like the Sacrifice of the Cross itself, it does not produce in every instance all the effect upon men's souls of which it is in itself capable. This requires no explanation, for in all God's dealings with men, free-will must co-operate with grace, and grace with free-will. But there is a certain effect of the Mass which may be justly called certain and never-failing. Every Mass without fail obtains for the person for whom it is offered (unless he prevents it by his own sinful state) first of all the remission of some of the punishment due to sin already forgiven, and, next, some grace, great or small, leading him to repentance or detestation of sin. Thus, in every Mass that is said throughout the world, grace is obtained for our holy Father the Pope, for Bishops and Clergy and every rank of the Church, and for all the faithful, living and dead; in a more special manner, grace is obtained for the Priest himself who celebrates, and who says, at the Offertory, that he offers the immaculate Host for his "innumerable sins, offences, and negligences"; and in a special manner also for the person for whom he offers, either of his own motion, or by the order of a superior, or in virtue of the usual stipend, as authorised by the Church. Besides this unfailing effect, which springs from the very nature of the Mass, there is another, which may

almost be said to be equally unfailing. This is, the obtaining of the particular grace or favour for which a particular Mass is offered. It is true that we do not always obtain, as far as we know, the specific intention for which a Mass is celebrated. That, however, is only because God foresees that it is not expedient, or not expedient at such a time ; but He is quite certain to give us something else, which in His infinite wisdom He knows will, here and now, be better for us. These effects of the holy Sacrifice are a result of the very nature of the Mass. But there are others which depend upon the person who celebrates and on those who assist. There is nothing that the Priest of God more anxiously desires than that he may become more and more worthy to stand at the altar of sacrifice. He knows that in proportion as he is more holy and more pleasing to God, so much the more acceptable will be his prayer and his oblation. He knows that the more devotion there is in his preparation, actual celebration, and thanksgiving, the more will his Mass profit him and profit others. The flock should be well aware that it is the same as regards themselves. The Mass is the lifting up of the Cross of our Redemption. Therefore, the more we are truly repentant of sin, the more earnest is our attention, and the greater our devotion, by so much the more confidently may we hope to propitiate Almighty God by assisting at that holy mystery, and the more abundantly shall we obtain what we ask for

The place which the holy Sacrifice holds in the

public worship of the Catholic Church is well known to all. It is the Priest's principal work. It is the great feature of the sanctification of the Sunday. It never ceases as each day comes round; nay, it may be said with truth that, as Malachias prophesied long ago, it is continually being offered "from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof" (Malachias i. 11). The first duty of a faithful Catholic, therefore, in regard to the Mass, is to endeavour to understand what it means, and what are those venerable prayers and ceremonies by which its celebration is accompanied. The Church is most anxious that the faithful should really be able to follow the ritual of the Mass. There is a very remarkable passage in the decrees of the Council of Trent on this point. The Council declares that, although the Mass contains much instruction for the faithful, still it is not expedient to allow it to be celebrated in any language except Latin. "But," continues the Council, "that the flock of Christ may not go hungry nor His little ones seek bread and there be no one to break it unto them, this Holy Synod commands all pastors and those who have the care of souls, frequently to explain, during Mass itself, portions of what the priest reads in the Mass, and at other times (and that especially on Sundays and festivals) to preach on some mystery of this holy Sacrifice." (Session xxii., ch. 8.) It is the duty of all, therefore, to attend such instructions. Many, no doubt, will find adequate explanations in one or the other of the numerous prayer-

books and manuals which abound, or in treatises and leaflets specially written on the Mass.[1] But is it not too evident to any one who observes a congregation at Mass on Sundays that a very large proportion have no book, are not interested, are listless, inattentive and irreverent, and seem to be assisting at a strange and incomprehensible rite? We exhort all our beloved clergy to take the utmost pains to interest their flocks in the Holy Sacrifice, and we earnestly ask all Catholics, old and young, rich and poor, to make every effort to learn what they can on this greatest of mysteries. If they understand the Mass, they will love the Mass.

And that they may truly love it and cherish it, what exertions should they not be ready to make? What more is there that would be required to sanctify a Christian flock if they only loved the Mass? A Christian cannot be faithful in attendance at Mass and continue long in a state of sin. Intemperance, dishonesty, impurity, quarrelling, evil language—none of these detestable habits which disgrace our population can live in the presence of the Mass. The reason is, that from the Divine Victim there comes to a sincere worshipper a mighty impulse and grace which turns his heart to his Maker and fills him with the horror of sin; that in the Mass he receives a supernatural light to see the

[1] A leaflet of the Catholic Truth Society, entitled *What are they doing at the Altar?* may be mentioned as useful to put into he hands of Catholics and Protestants. There is also the handy manual by the late Cardinal Vaughan, "On the Holy Mass."

value of his immortal soul and the nearness of eternity; and that in the power of Him who is immolated there he carries away a supernatural strength to enable him to stand firm against temptation. By the Mass the child is confirmed in its holy Faith and in its innocence; young men and young women are fortified against the perils of the world and of evil companions; families obtain the grace of serving God in justice and peace; and in the Mass our whole Christian community gather together and meet in brotherly love, all filled with the same desires, animated with the same purposes, rejoicing in the same holy Catholic Faith, loving the same merciful Redeemer, and looking forward to the same everlasting life. Can anything be more full of affliction to the heart of a pastor than to see, Sunday after Sunday, a large part of his flock neglecting to attend at Mass? What is it that keeps them away? There can be no mistake about it; it is their indifference to their souls and to their God. What are they doing? How do they occupy their time whilst the blessed words are being said in the Church and the Lord of Hosts is distributing the riches of His mercy? We know too well. They are idling, loafing, gossiping, sleeping; they are, perhaps, if they are women, occupied at home, making up for bad management or slatternly habits; and too often they are adding sin to sin, by using the Lord's holy day to indulge in intemperance more freely than they could upon a weekday. And this is the flock for whom Jesus

died, and for whom He instituted the Blessed Sacrament! What can be done, dear children in Jesus Christ, to increase attendance at Mass? The Priest does his best by a house-to-house visiting, which is often troublesome and painful. What can the flock do? First, each man, woman, or child who hears these words can resolve never to miss Mass personally, whenever there is an obligation to hear it, as on Sundays. Next, parents can be particular in having their children ready for Mass and in seeing that they either attend the children's Mass or accompany themselves to Church. Thirdly, such work as is necessary on Sundays can be arranged, as far as possible, so as not to interfere with Mass. Fourthly, wives can persuade their husbands, men can induce their friends, lodging-house keepers can urge their lodgers, and young or old can bring to Mass every one whom they can manage in any way to influence. As for those whom work or distance may seem to excuse altogether, let them remember that however lawful the excuse may be, yet every one is bound to hear Mass sometimes; to be absent from Mass, for any reason whatever that we can in any way control, would, if the absence were long-continued, place the soul in deadly peril. And, as a concluding word of exhortation, let us all, whenever we assist at Mass, make some act of reparation to the Divine Victim for the sin of those who culpably stay away, and pray for His grace that they may amend and return to the fulfilment of their duty.

XI

THE CHRISTIAN PRIESTHOOD

The priestly Order receives supernatural power from Christ to teach, to consecrate, and to confer Sacraments—These powers not temporary, like certain miraculous prerogatives, but a part of the continued dispensation of the Incarnation —Non-Catholic views of the Priesthood—The truth is, that the Priest brings men to God as no other agency can do ; that his claim to teach religion cannot justly be called "domineering" ; and that his ministerial prerogatives are easily distinguished from his personal weaknesses—The preparation necessary for the priestly office.

THERE can be no subject which divides this and other Protestant countries more decidedly than the existence, in Christ's Church, of a true and real Priesthood. Catholics believe that Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has instituted a priestly order, with certain prerogatives and powers. First, the Priesthood has authority to teach the Holy Faith, to interpret it, and to guard it ; and although no individual priest or bishop is infallibly protected against the possibility of teaching erroneously, yet the Priesthood as a whole is infallible, because the Bishops as a body, with the Supreme Pontiff at their head, are infallible, as is also the Pontiff himself when he pronounces as Pontiff. Next, the Priesthood has the gift of Holy Orders—that is, it receives from Christ, through a ministry

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which has never ceased from Apostolic times, a true spiritual endowment which enables priests to consecrate the Holy Eucharist, and thus to cause Jesus Christ to be truly present under the appearance of Bread and Wine, and to perform the Eucharistic Sacrifice ; they can also confer the other Christian Sacraments, by their acts and words bestowing real spiritual grace, according to Our Lord's institution, upon those who are rightly disposed. These attributes and prerogatives of the Priesthood are justly called "supernatural;" for they arise from no gift of nature, they are not acquired by any exertion of natural faculty, nor are they conferred by any human agent as from himself. They come by the will and institution of Christ, through a certain definite and recognisable ministry. It is not, however, quite right to call them "miraculous." If that word means nothing more than wonderful or stupendous, doubtless such gifts as these are among the greatest wonders of God's power, and among the most immediate effects of that greatest of all prodigies, the Incarnation of the Son of God. But a "miracle," properly so called, is an external manifestation of God's interference with natural law, such as the bodily senses can take cognisance of. Thus, the calling down of fire from heaven was a miracle, and the changing of the water into wine. But the powers of the priesthood are not recognisable by the eyes or ears of men, either in themselves or in their immediate results. It is true, a priest's grace may show itself in his exterior—but

this effect is not confined to the priestly endowment itself, but is seen in many other servants of God. It is true also, that as a result of the gifts of the priesthood men grow better, piety is increased, and the world is changed. But these again are not a direct or immediate effect. What the priest has by his Priesthood is a power visible only to the eye of Faith ; what he does or operates, whether on the altar of Sacrifice or in the souls of the faithful, makes no change or alteration in outward appearances, and would never be known were it not for the word of Christ, which is handed down from age to age even till the consummation comes. Doubtless the Priesthood have often possessed and exercised miraculous powers. They have wrought signs, healed the sick, raised the dead. But these signs were for a time, in certain places, and for certain purposes. Thus, they were necessary in the beginnings of Christianity, in order to convince the world of the divine mission of the Church. When Christianity had spread itself over the earth they ceased. But they have often reappeared, and they will still reappear in the future—when God thinks them needed, or when the childlike faith of God's children deserves to be rewarded. It is easy to see from this consideration how unreasonable it is to argue, as some non-Catholics do, that the sacramental or priestly powers given by our Lord in the New Testament have ceased and disappeared just like the gifts of tongues or of healing. Miracles proper, being a visible interfer-

ence with the laws of nature, are necessarily rare and exceptional. If they were otherwise, they would lose all their cogency. But the spiritual blessings given to the world by the Incarnation are naturally intended for every generation. If Peter and John, and Titus and Timothy, were empowered to impose hands, to minister at the "breaking of bread," and to forgive sins, this was evidently the beginning of a regular order of things—of a dispensation that was to continue as long as Christianity lasted. If a ministry was needed in apostolic times, if the holy Liturgy was then good for human souls, if men's sins had then to be forgiven by priestly absolution, the same wants and needs would have to be provided for in succeeding ages; men would still sin, still require public worship, still be in want of guidance in Faith, and still be benefited and lifted up by the Body of Christ and the wise and wonderfully effective dispensation of the Christian Sacraments. It is not every day that the world deserves or requires a sign; there is no day or hour when it is not the better for the uplifted hand of the Priest.

It is needless to say that all non-Catholics, except what is called the "High Church" school of Anglicans, utterly repudiate and reject this idea of the Christian Priesthood. Luther himself set the example, and declared, at the very beginning of his career, that "there is no visible and external priesthood in the New Testament, except what Satan has set up through human lies." In this country, Cranmer, who founded the

established "Church of England" as it now is, assiduously asserted the same thing. At the present day, the vast majority of the people of this country, whether Anglicans or Nonconformists, consider clergymen to be in no way different from the laity, except in such things as personal character, training, or appointment. Rejecting the Eucharistic Sacrifice, they reject the Altar and the Priest. A minister may preach, argue, and exhort; but no man is allowed to claim sacramental power, or the right to teach with authority. Such pretensions they stigmatise as sacrilegious and injurious to Christ; as bringing human interference between a man and his Saviour; and as the source and root of that pride and love of power which they allege to have characterised the clergy in all ages.

If anything, however, is absolutely certain from history and experience, it is that the Catholic Priesthood, so far from coming between men and their Redeemer, have been the most effective means which it is possible to conceive of bringing man and his God together. By the Word of God, by the authority of Office, by the ministry of Penance, by the use of the Blessed Sacrament, Catholic priests have, everywhere and always, done what no other agency could do in drawing men and women—not merely to subscribe to a creed, to give their names to a sect, or to practise an external ordinance—but to renounce sin, to turn to God, to love Him and to serve Him. We who have experience in this matter cannot possibly be

deceived. Those who denounce the priestly ministry without ever having tried it are at the least rash and imprudent; or, what is more probable, they do not know what is really meant by devout love, by piety, or by sorrow for sin, but act as if spiritual Christianity consisted in a man's assuming that Christ has saved him and then neglecting Christ in every other respect.

We are told that a Priesthood must necessarily be proud and domineering. But it is wrong to confuse pride with the moderate exercise of lawful authority. What the accusers of the priest really mean is, that there is no right anywhere existing in the world to control a man's liberty to think as he likes in religious matters. If there is not, then certainly the priest domineers; for he defines religious doctrine and lays down religious law. This is a part of the Catholic system; and Catholics maintain that it is Christ's system. There can be no pride in discharging such an office as this. It need not be denied that there have been priests who have been proud and even tyrannical. As long as human nature exists, men will be liable to human faults. But it is not their priesthood that has made them proud. If we look at the world, we shall find that all men who have influence, dominion, wealth or learning, have shown themselves liable to the vice of pride. Perhaps there is no body of professional men of our own times who have evinced more self-sufficiency, more tyrannical interference with their neighbours, and a more haughty spirit of dictation, than the ministers of the Anglican Evangelical school, and of the Non-

conformist bodies—all of whom most strenuously reject the doctrine of a Priesthood. As for the Catholic priest, his training makes him humble, because he is trained to devote himself to the divine truth of Christ's revelation. To this holy word of his Master, he learns to have the loyalty and fidelity of a chosen disciple. When he preaches it to the world, he is not thinking of leading intelligences captive or of forging fetters for human beings, but of spreading that blessed light which it is the grandest privilege of men to accept and to obey. When he urges men to approach to his Altar and to receive his ministrations, he is not thinking of a following or a retinue, of conquest or of personal credit, but of bringing souls within the influence of the Precious Blood. He is not in the position of one who imposes his own views upon others. He does not invent or manufacture the things that he enforces. He finds the word and the faith already in being. He finds a treasure which he has to distribute. He finds a reservoir into which he has to dip his own ineffectual vessel. He has to believe first himself; and before he can hope to influence any hearts he must bow his own heart and soul, not merely to the text of the Gospel or the tradition of the Fathers, but to the actual, living authority of the teaching Church of the very times in which he lives. If anything more were required to keep him in humility, he would find it in his poor success with men, and his failure to impress or influence the hearts and wills of those to whom his ministry is

addressed. He teaches, he exhorts, he visits, he waits; and how many refuse to hear—how few give their whole attention! How impervious are the souls of men and women to the deepest learning, the strongest eloquence, the most energetic zeal! No Catholic priest, unless he is of the number of the very foolish, can go through even a brief experience of priestly work without feeling that all his sowing and all his watering are to no purpose unless God giveth the increase. There may have been times in the world's history when the priest had considerable civil power, and exercised it sometimes without due moderation. In this he was blamable, but not more blamable than others of his own generation. Moreover, for one proud priest there could always be found ten, or ten times ten, who knew how to unite apostolic liberty with the meekness and simplicity of Christ. In these days a priest has few things to make him proud. He is the servant of all, and his reward is not always even the gratitude of his own people. Still, it may be said with truth that no Catholic flock ever mistake a priest's firm authority for mere personal domination or dictation. They are, as a rule, too well instructed to do that. They know how he comes by those clear statements, that lucid instruction, those peremptory but most reasonable directions and commands which he repeats and enforces in public and in private. The priest has no choice but to obey his Master. As St. Paul said, "If I preach the Gospel it is no glory to me; for a necessity lieth upon me; for woe is unto me if I

preach not the Gospel" (1 Cor. ix. 16). And whatever there may be in the priest's manner, or tone, or temper, which may, now and again, suggest the frailty of human nature, yet the faithful and sensible Catholic has little difficulty in acquiescence and obedience, for he knows that his submission is given, not to the man, but rather to the Lord and Master, Who speaks by the mouth of His servant.

It has always been the desire and the aim of the Church that the ministers of God should be as well prepared, both in mind and heart, for their great office as training and education can make them. There is necessarily much to be learnt before a man can be trusted to teach and guide the flock. Such a man must be cultivated in literature and science, well acquainted with Holy Scripture, skilled in divinity, and prepared to give prudent direction in matters of conduct and morality. Moreover, he must be a spiritual man, both in principle and in practice; he must not only know what Christian virtue is, and how it is to be acquired, but he must have schooled himself for many years in the school of Jesus Christ —learning to cling to God, to subdue his human passions, and to show forth in his life the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The more effectively he is thus prepared, the better will he succeed in the work of the ministry; for although it is God Who commissions him and God Who makes his efforts fruitful, yet we know that Our Lord wishes his instruments to take pains to fit themselves for His work, and that to undertake the priesthood without due in-

struction and training is to be guilty of criminal presumption and to tempt Almighty God. Hence a priest's course of education is a long one. After the five or six years of his schooling as a child, he enters on a special course of study, lasting from five to seven years longer, during which he is occupied in the acquirement of that learning and that perfection of personal character which are specially required by his holy vocation and profession. It is for this reason that the maintenance of well-appointed ecclesiastical seminaries is of so much importance to the advancement of the Kingdom of God. The English Bishops, under the guidance of the Holy See, have never ceased to do what their very limited resources have allowed to provide such seminaries. You are aware that, a few years ago, the Bishops of the Southern half of the country, with the Archbishop of Westminster at their head, jointly established the College of Oscott as their common seminary. This splendid institution, with its excellent buildings, its learned and pious professors, and its full and carefully-considered course of studies, is prepared to train our young men to be such priests as the glory of God and the present needs of the world require priests to be. All Catholics who are zealous in the Kingdom of God should take an interest in the education of Church students, contributing to the best of their power to the funds for that purpose, and often directing their prayers to obtain from God the great blessing of holy and wise priests.

XII.

THE SACRED HEART

What is meant by "devotion"—God assumed human nature to attract our love to Himself—How His love shines forth in His acts, words, and sacred Passion—The Heart of Jesus means the "love" of Jesus—His "heart" a natural symbol of that love, and clearly intended by Almighty God to be so used.

It is just about two hundred years since Our Lord and Saviour, in a series of revelations and visions, commanded the Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque to let the world know that He wished to be honoured by the visible form and effigy of His human Heart. The holy woman on whom He laid this charge was a simple nun in a Convent of the Order of the Visitation, in the East of France. The story of how the devotion spread, first in the community itself, next to other Convents, then to whole dioceses, and finally to all France and to Catholic Europe, will always be one of the most wonderful in the history of the Church. It may be read in many books, and we do not propose to enter into it now. Our purpose is rather to bring before you what this most marked interference of God's power signifies to every Christian; to point out its relation to worship, to love, and to morality; and thus to help all to realise its connection with their everlasting salvation.

It is necessary, in order to understand what is meant by "Devotion to the Sacred Heart," to have a clear idea of what is meant by Devotion in general. Religion then, as you know, does not consist merely in observing a law; it implies the worship and love of a Person. That Person is God. He has, indeed, given us a law; He has partly written this law on our heart and conscience, and partly declared it by supernatural revelation; and we have no real religion if we do not keep God's law. But this is not enough. To be kind to others, to practise self-restraint, to be just, to be temperate, to be modest—all this is necessary, but it is not enough. A heathen might do as much as this; the followers of a learned man, of a philosopher, might profess to do all this, and yet have no *religion* at all. For the first and greatest commandment of religion is: Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God. Now love consists of four principal acts:—To prefer God before all things; to dedicate to Him all we have and are; to detest all that opposes Him; and to do His will always and in all things. When a man's will thus turns to God, and turns to Him promptly and energetically, that man is said to be Devout. For Devotion is a resolute, steady, and intense occupation of the human will in the love and service of our heavenly Father.

From this it will be seen at once how important in Devotion must be everything which affects our Feelings or Emotions. Religion is not Feeling or Emotion; but Feeling and Emotion can both intensify

our religious fervour, and can keep it down or extinguish it. We may be, and by God's grace we often are, devout in spite of contrary feelings, of coldness, of distractions, and of temptations. But, for all that, it is intended that our feelings should as far as possible be enlisted on the side of our devotion; and we can hardly use words that are too strong in describing how closely Devotion *depends* on our feelings. The warm and earnest love of God, which is Devotion, depends upon our feelings and sensibilities, just like the fruits of the earth depend upon the sun and upon the temperature of the air. Our Devotion must spring from our reason; but whether it is to be intense, continuous and perfect, will be decided in a very large majority of cases by what we feel. The tried servant of God, the Saint, has often to struggle to love God intensely in spite of the rebellions of his lower nature; and his union with God becomes, by that very struggle, all the more intense. But we are here concerned with the multitude, with the ordinary Christian soul; and of them—of us—it may be most truly said that we must make our feelings religious, or we shall have very little religion at all.

This, you will observe, is a truth consecrated by God Himself in the dispensation of the Incarnation. Because God was far off, He came down to the earth. Because He was inconceivable, He took human lineaments. Because He was an intangible spirit, He assumed a Body and offered it to be handled and

felt. Because His dwelling was amid light inaccessible, He was found at Bethlehem, at Nazareth, by the Lake, and on the Cross. Thus men were enabled to come near Him; the poor and the ignorant could think about Him; the eye and imagination of the whole human race could reach Him and know Him. With still more powerful effect, because with a more subtle knowledge of man's heart, He took human interests and human cares. He took not only a man's appearance but a man's true human nature. The words breathing solicitude and kindness which He spoke were the expression of real feeling. The actions which He has left behind are an indication of a full and abounding human compassion and sympathy which truly burned in His bosom. This was His nature—His human nature; and He seems to have planned everything with the purpose of letting us know it—of making you and me, and all generations, everywhere, understand and feel that the supreme attribute of this nature is His boundless affection for us whom His hands have made. Had He remained hidden in the heavens, we might have believed this, but we should have had difficulty in realising it. Human speech has no adequate names for infinite attributes. But when He translates His infinite love into the mercy and compassion of His humanity, we can almost *see* what He would have us see. When the distant waters shine, we understand that the deep ocean is there. When the smoke rises from the mountain top, we know of the fire within. And

when that Divine Saviour journeys through Judea and Galilee and calls to men to "learn of Him," for that He is the Way and He is the Life, we seem to feel the strong love of a Heart which pours itself out in appeals like these. He speaks as to His own "Brethren": He "has pity" on the crowds who come to hear Him: He embraces the little children; —and who can help knowing what affection is burning behind these burning words and loving deeds? He cries to the heavy-burdened that it is He who will refresh them; He calls to the wandering sheep that He alone is the Shepherd Who can lead them and feed them and carry them on His shoulders; — and the glow of a furnace of almighty mercy seems to open as this human speech falls on the ears of men. He speaks of His "desire"; and of His "thirst"; and in such utterances of His lips we seem to hear the surgings of an ocean, fathomless in the possibilities of bounty to the souls of men. But when He lets the sin of the world work its bitterness and bend His brow to the ground and force the blood from His veins; when He gives His Body to the smiter, and His face to the scoffer; when He stretches out on the Cross nailed and bleeding Hands and hangs silent under the dark sky of Calvary—it is then that doubt itself can doubt no longer. What must be the love of that Heart, which could seek out and go through so much, with no compulsion but its love?

The Heart of Jesus is the Love of Jesus; the immense, unspeakable, inexhaustible Love, of which

His life, His words, and His sufferings are the signs and proofs. In every age since Christianity has been preached He has found devices for keeping before men's eyes the signs and evidences of that Love which is the vital essence of His incarnate being. He has inspired His servants to teach and to enforce the history of His life and Passion. He has taught chosen souls to search that record for every one of His words, and for every one of His actions. He has made the sacred Eucharistic Sacrifice the daily contemplation and the daily help of His Church. He has magnified His most Blessed Sacrament, He has given His Cross to kings for veneration, to saints for seraphic love, to doctors and evangelists, that men might in every century understand it better. He has taken the instruments of His Passion one by one and surrounded them with a devotion whose Object is Himself. He has spread the fruitful exercise of the Way of the Cross in every land, that hearts might grow more and more familiar with His sorrows, and might offer them for the souls whom He would free from the purifying fires. But in these later ages He has not been content with this, or with all that He has heretofore inspired and that His servants have practised. The revelation of the devotion of the Sacred Heart is the new and mighty act of His power and wisdom, in order to keep the Gospel of His Love before the eyes of those who seem never wearied of forgetting Him. It is new ; for although it was given to the world

two hundred years ago, and although a St. Bernard and a St. Gertrude anticipated it long before, yet two hundred years is not much out of nineteen centuries. For these latter times—for the times when Jansenism kept men from the Cross under pretence of reverence, for the times when free-thinking Kings and Ministers tried to bind the Church in chains, and for the times when Atheism directed by continental Freemasonry has been striving to kill the Christian religion—for these phases of the Christian warfare has been reserved this devotion which is so peculiarly dear to ourselves.

Yet the substance and essence of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart is very far from being a novelty in the Church. It is substantially nothing else than the Devotion to the Sacred Humanity. The history of the Christian life, as you have already heard, is nothing but a history of devotion to the Humanity of God. St. John the Apostle spoke of it when he said, "That which we have seen, which our ears have heard, which we have handled of the Word of God" (1 John i. 1). It is to guard this devotion that the Church condemned the early heretics—the Arians because they denied that the Person to Whom that Humanity belonged was true God; the Nestorians because they also, from a different point of view, refused to accept the Man Christ Jesus as our God and Creator; the Eutychians because they taught that the Humanity of the Incarnate God was not a real Humanity and had no human soul or

human will, and therefore no loving Sacred Heart. It was this same Devotion which created the religious Art of the ages of faith, filling the Churches with the effigy of the Madonna and Child and the figure of the Crucified. It was this which produced the glorious Catholic ritual of the Blessed Sacrament. The devotion to the Sacred Heart is this same devotion to God made Man ; to the Babe of Bethlehem, the Good Shepherd, the Victim of Calvary. To select this particular organ of Our Lord's sacred Body for remembrance and adoration is natural, pious, and profitable. The Heart of Our Lord is adorable, as being an existing and integrating part of the sacred Humanity. We do not, in our devotion, separate the Heart from the Body, or the Body from the Person of God the Son. The only sense in which the theology of the Incarnation, or even common and ordinary Christian faith, permits us to think devotionally of Our Lord's most holy Heart, is as beating in His breast, as vivified and informed by His human Soul, as owned and upheld by a Divine Person, as that Divine Person's *own* Heart, and as therefore adorable like all the Nature which is so possessed and so lifted up. But it is profitable to place before our eyes the image of this adorable Heart. The reason is evident from what has been said. We want a symbol and expression for that central and essential burning Love of which all the words and acts of Jesus, and His very Incarnation itself, are only signs. The heart, as St. Alfonso

says, is the noblest human organ, and is considered in common thought as the source of the energy and endeavour and expansiveness of the moral nature. Therefore it is natural and profitable to speak of Our Lord's most noble Heart; and if to speak of it, then to represent it. But there is more than this. Since the Church has pronounced the Beatification of Margaret Mary Alacoque, it would be rash to doubt that this particular form of devotion has been revealed and enjoined by Almighty God Himself. We cannot doubt, therefore, that there is something in it which is especially adapted to the requirements of the Christian soul in these latter times. He told Blessed Margaret Mary that He took a particular pleasure in being honoured under the figure of His human Heart, and wished that its image should be exposed in public; "in order," He said, "to touch the insensible hearts of men." And one day, showing to her the form of His Heart, He said, "Behold the Heart which has so loved men!" Another day she had a vision of Our Lord, who appeared all glorious, His five sacred wounds shining like suns, and flames of fire issuing from every part of His sacred Humanity, especially His breast, which was like a burning furnace. He then seemed to open His bosom and she saw the Divine Heart, the living source of all this fire. Addressing her, Our Lord discovered to her the ineffable marvels of His pure love, and the excess of His love for men, from whom He received only ingratitude; "and it

is their ingratitude," He said, "which I feel more than all that I suffered in My Passion. Did they only make some return to My Love, I would think little of all I have done for them, and would be happy to endure even more." Once, He discovered her His loving Heart, torn and pierced with wounds; "thus," He said, "am I wounded by those whom I love; yet I never cease to love them." From passages like these, which might easily be multiplied, it cannot be doubted that the figure of the Divine Heart of Jesus has a peculiar efficacy in awakening the hearts of men, first to Remembrance and Gratitude, next to Reparation, and thirdly to Sacrifice. These are the special Christian virtues which these times require. They are times of great activity, when rich and poor work hard, live with energy, and have a whole world of physical and mental enjoyment within their reach. The condition of the times pushes the Incarnation and the Cross into the background. What goes by the name of Christianity is only civilisation, benevolence, and vague sentiment. Even the preaching of the sects and their professedly religious exhortations seldom go beyond the inculcation of reverence for God, and honesty and kindness towards one another. These things, it is true, must never be forgotten. But as Christians we have to do more; we have to *remember Jesus Christ.* We have to remember and be grateful for His coming, His words, His acts, and His sacred Passion. That alone which will save a Christian is the devout meditation

of Christ crucified—a subject which this generation passes by. That alone which is worth doing, is to save out of the hurry of our life such times and moments as we can, and consecrate them in ardent affection to Him who came down to draw us to Himself. It is this that the sacred image of Our Lord's Heart puts us in mind to do. From Remembrance it leads on to Reparation. As we remember the infinite love of Jesus, and our own sins, and the coldness and ingratitude of men, we are led to desire to make Him some compensation. Because so few remember Him, we would seek out His presence the oftener; because so few pray, we would pray more; because so many souls are being lost, we would try to save souls; because the world and the flesh pursue their lusts, we would draw nearer to the Cross. And thus we are urged on to Sacrifice. We grow anxious to understand why Christ suffered; we desire to imitate Him; we accept our own crosses in union with His; we practise self-restraint, self-denial, mortification; and we learn by degrees to suffer with Jesus and for Jesus. It is by this test that we discover the thoroughly Christian power of the Sacred Heart. In a world where the God made Man is unknown to one great division of civilised men, ignored by another, and most inadequately understood even by those who talk so much about Him, it is a rallying standard for those who would live up to the mystery of Redemption. It is the heart's Book of the Gospels, the echo of Christ's teaching, the shadow of His

power, the virtue of His Cross. It is the book of the poor, the memory of the busy, the reproach of the worldly, the consolation of the suffering. It is the messenger of the Blessed Sacrament and the advocate of souls. It is the light and explanation of this chequered mortal life and the pledge of the mercy of Him whom we look for to be our judge, when mortality shall be ended and the real life about to begin.

The Decree of our late Holy Father Pope Leo XIII., dated June 28th, 1889, raises the Feast of the Sacred Heart to the rank of a "double feast of the First Class" for the whole Catholic world. In making known this decision, the Sovereign Pontiff states that he has added this increased solemnity to the festival at the earnest prayer of numerous Bishops and a large number of the clergy and faithful. He goes on to say that his purpose in doing so is to deepen the love of all of us towards our most loving Redeemer, to promote the practice of Reparation, and to stimulate prayer for the spread of Faith and the peace and welfare of Christian peoples. In the same Decree the Holy Father permits, in all Churches and Oratories in which on the first Friday of the month there are special exercises of piety in honour of the Divine Heart, the Votive Mass of the Sacred Heart even on doubles. Wherever this privilege is intended to be made use of, the Bishop should be consulted, both because it would appear that his approbation is required, and in order to

make sure of the exact technical wording of the grant.

Among the numerous promises of blessing and help given by Our Lord Himself to the Blessed Margaret Mary are the following: He will bless every house in which the image of His Sacred Heart is exposed and honoured; to all who promote this devotion He will give all necessary graces, establishing peace in their families and consoling them in all their difficulties; to priests He will give the power of touching the hardest hearts; the tepid shall become fervent, and the fervent shall rise to perfection; and He will be their secure refuge at the hour of death.

XIII

THE SPIRIT OF THE GOSPEL

The worldly chill which prevents Christian hearts from being generous with God—How Our Lord describes that "faith" which He seeks in His servants—It implies seeking Him in His Church and Sacraments, worshipping Him by piety, and sincerely accepting the ordinances of existing ecclesiastical authority.

It will always be true that many more faithful profess Catholicism than love Jesus Christ with all their heart. What is the reason of this? The world, the flesh, and the devil, you will say. That is true. But at this moment it is not necessary to speak of gross or grievous sin. The drunkard, the unjust, the impure—these may be left out of consideration at present. There is a more subtle sin in the air. It is a sin, or a sinful disposition, which spoils the goodness of the good. It is the worldly chill which specially prevails at this time in which we live. It causes many of us to serve Christ, but not to sympathise with Him; to bow down, but hardly to feel affection; to do pious things, but not to surrender ourselves; to show respect, loyalty, perhaps fear, but not to give Him all our mind and strength. Sometimes in the early summer, upon our coasts, long after the hot summer sun has prevailed for many

days, the water of the sea remains wintry, cold, and dangerous. Christ and His Christianity—His Church, His Sacraments, His true Body and Blood, and all His blessed gifts and privileges—have been shedding light and warmth since we were born, upon us who are believers. What is the reason that the under-currents of our soul are still so cold?—that there is a distance, a self-seeking, an aloofness, in so many of us, which still makes us externs to the true Gospel spirit, and causes us to treat our Blessed Lord, not as the one only Friend and Father that we have, but somewhat as a mere teacher, a master, an overseer, a stranger?

The "Gospel spirit" is not a vague phrase, that preachers use to fill out their sentences. It does not so much refer to the passions, as to the mind. The commandments of God divide themselves into three classes—those which prescribe the worship and service of God, those which strengthen filial and social duty, and those which put a bridle on the license of man's evil propensities. The Gospel spirit regards the first division—our attitude to God, as now defined and illuminated by the Incarnation. To show what it is, let us consider in the first place what is that special "worldly chill" which at this particular period seems to keep so low the warmth of the redeemed souls of Christians who ought to be so generous with their Saviour.

There are certain words and phrases, commonly and constantly repeated, which you will recognise as

characterising the intelligent thought of the present time. People talk of science—of natural law—of freedom—and of progress. These words, and others like them, are analysed by our philosophers, written up by our popular writers, accepted in the pulpit by the preachers, and used like counters, in every possible combination and relation, by the periodical press. They are not evil words; on the contrary, they are good words, and are the names of good things. But you do not find any of them, as now used, in the New Testament. They do not, therefore, express the Gospel spirit. On the contrary, in modern speech, as no one can deny, freedom means, or includes, independence in belief; progress means change in religious conviction; and that aggressive reverence which is professed for natural law and for science is pointed against the spirituality of the soul and the freedom of the will, against grace, revelation, and the very existence of a personal God. There is no real need that those words should be so made use of. Science is from God, freedom, rightly understood, is from Christ, progress is a law of Catholic truth itself. But the fact remains; a vast majority of the thinking people among whom you live are penetrated and saturated with a spirit such as is here described. And if this is so, it may be taken for granted that we ourselves are tinged with the same spirit, and that we shall require all our own efforts, and all God's holy grace, to keep ourselves sound, loyal, and Christian.

For the "Gospel spirit" is not at all hard to recognise, even by those who read only on the surface of the New Testament. Our Divine Lord teaches many things—such as kindness, just dealing, and purity. But that on which He most insists—whether as the true way to enter His Kingdom, or as the real secret of imitating Himself—is the lowly, childlike mind which stoops itself beneath His heavenly yoke.

There can be no possibility of doubt on this subject; the essential spirit of the Gospel is a personal surrender of mind and heart to Jesus Christ. You will recollect the incident of the healing of the Centurion's servant. It was at Capharnaum—that second Nazareth, where Jesus and Mary made their home during His public ministry. It was this officer's "faith" that drew upon him the compassion and the beneficence of Christ; and you will remember that, before pronouncing the words of power, He looked round, and lovingly complained that the children of the Kingdom—the people of that favoured shore of the Sea of Galilee—the people of Capharnaum, Magdala, Bethsaida, Corozain—had never shown such faith. What did He mean by that pregnant word Faith? Two years later, He returned from Jerusalem to Capharnaum, after the Feast of Tabernacles, at which He had spoken the parable of the Good Shepherd. Still He found no faith. And it was in the sorrow of His sacred Heart over the coldness of those favoured populations, that He uttered the

terrible prophecy of which we read in the eleventh chapter of St. Matthew: "Woe to thee, Corozain; woe to thee, Bethsaida; for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, they had long ago done penance in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And thou, Capharnaum, shalt thou be exalted up to heaven? Thou shalt go down even unto hell. For if in Sodom had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in thee, perhaps it had remained unto this day. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee."[1] Thus did He foretell the fate of those who see and hear, and yet who do not believe; who know that their Saviour is before them, yet refuse to surrender themselves to His yoke. For this is what He meant by that word which was so constantly in His mouth—Faith. Read on a little further in the narrative of His life. It is on the same shore, and probably at the same hour. The seventy-two disciples have returned from their mission, and have joyfully announced to Him their success. Then He is rapt in ecstasy, and He says: "I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones." "Come to me, all . . . Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me . . . for my yoke is easy and my burden light."[2]

[1] St. Matthew xi. 21–23. [2] Ibid., 25–30.

The "faith" then, that He requires, is that childlike spirit which lovingly accepts the yoke and the burden of His blessed teaching. It is not mere acceptance; not the mere recognition or approval of the lovely and wise precepts of a messenger sent by God. It is a personal surrender, without shrinking, without holding back, of the whole heart and will; so that there is no longer any disposition to examine, to discuss, or to bargain; but only the warm loyalty of a soul which Jesus Christ has conquered and holds captive for ever more. It was this "faith" which He found in the blind, the deaf and dumb, the sick, whom He healed and whose sins He forgave. It was this which He found in the men who took the roof off a house and laid a cripple at His feet. It was this which He saw in her who poured out the precious ointment upon Him at the feast in the Pharisee's house — "Thy faith hath made thee whole." And when His Apostles once prayed to Him, "Lord, increase our faith,"[1] He replied, that if they had even the least grain or tincture of real faith, they would be able to perform any wonders whatsoever; because the Gospel faith means, not merely the belief of this thing or of that, nor the acquisition of any stores of religious information whatever, but the total realisation by the human heart of the rights, the love, and the power of Jesus Christ.

You cannot be at a loss, dear children in Jesus

[1] St. Luke xvii. 5.

Christ, to apply these thoughts to the circumstances in which we all live at present. In one sense, you certainly have faith ; that is, you hold Catholic truth as God has revealed it and the Church proposes it. But the Gospel "faith"—the Gospel childlike spirit —goes much further. And no one can pay due and genuine homage to our Divine Saviour who is not imbued with that faith and spirit even in his actual Catholic life.

Let us briefly see what it implies.

If you consider those suppliants and petitioners of the New Testament whose "faith" was praised by our Saviour, you will observe three elements in their behaviour to Him. First, they seek Him ; next they worship Him ; and thirdly they obey Him. They first take every trouble to present themselves personally before His face—journeying painful journeys, braving opposition and ridicule, in their thirst to hear His voice and to feel the touch of His hand. Then, see with what devotion they behave to Him—full of awe, yet moved with a peculiar affection which, in the common phrase, absolutely "believes" in Him, as a friend and father. Finally, what He commands they do—some going to the priests, others renouncing dangerous occupations, others following Him to the death, and all giving up sin.

What is asked of us, at the present time, is a "faith" such as this, towards Christ as now present in the world ; present by His teaching, by His sacraments, and by His Eucharistic Presence. Towards these things

we must have the spirit of little children, or else He will not heal us—cannot save us. You cannot separate Christ from Christ's dispensations. When He was upon earth, it was not those who dwelt in imagination upon the prophecies of the Messias that He healed, but those who sought Him and found His presence. So now—it is not those who think of Jesus Christ as a figure of history, or those who coldly hold the creeds, that He draws to Himself; but those who live in the religious dispensation in which He Himself is still with us. We have, first, to seek our religion, and to learn our religion. We have to learn formularies and catechisms in our childhood, and to continue to follow instructions, to read, and to think, all through our lives. How few Catholics know one hundredth part of the treasures that are contained in God's word, in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in the Sacraments, in the Liturgy, in the lives of the Saints! There is little excuse for them. Their clergy are always putting before them the things of God. The diffusion of cheap books and leaflets should help them to give at least a part of that attention to their holy Faith which they now waste on stupid and trashy literature of another kind. Even if a Catholic reads but little, he can, if he will, learn daily more of Christ, by attending his Church, and, there, before the sanctuary of his God, letting his mind dwell on what is before his very eyes.

But we must not only seek Him; we must also worship Him. The practice of fervent, spiritual prayer to our Blessed Lord is the very essence of the

Gospel spirit of lowliness and faith. What happens with so many Catholics? A hurried morning prayer —very often none at all; Mass only on Sundays—the shortest Mass we can get—a Mass heard with a cold and distracted mind, in a lazy posture, with a few book-prayers perhaps, but with no inward raising of the heart; Confession and the Holy Eucharist at rare intervals, hastily got through, without seriousness or earnestness, and so back to our worldly life; no prayer during the day, but perhaps two or three minutes on our knees at night. Is this piety? We may talk of Solemn Homage to Jesus Christ, of sermons, expositions, and pilgrimages; if we do not bring our own hearts nearer to Him, these things will only pass over us as the sunshine over the snows of December, leaving all as hard and cold as it was before.

There is no need to say anything about obedience and sacrifice—the third element of Gospel "faith"—except this—that the spirit of Christ requires us not only to reject that of the world and the flesh, but also to accept His. There are some Catholics who seem to think they can balance themselves between the two. They feel a due horror of the seven deadly sins; but they object to surrender themselves to their Saviour. They may not always see this. But the test is easy. Do they, or do they not, bow down with real simplicity before the teaching of the Church; before the utterances of the Sovereign Pontiff, and of ecclesiastical superiors? Do they accept, as children, the practices of the Church—her actual and present spirit, her

devotions, her ritual? For any one who criticises the hierarchy, or looks on as a cold outsider at what is going on in the sanctuary and the temple, is not of Christ's spirit; his "faith" is wanting, and our Lord will not bestow on him the wonders of His power. For the Catholic Church system, we must never forget, is Christ on earth. It is true, the strict infallibility of the Church does not extend to everything; it is also true that particular bishops and priests are neither infallible, nor necessarily wise and prudent. But you can recognise the Atlantic Ocean, although you may not always know, on its shores, what is the ocean and what is the water of a muddy river from the land. To distinguish, to object, to hang back, may or may not be necessary, on rare occasions. But it remains true that the spirit of Christ is that humbling of the mind, that disregard of human respect, and that trust in what one cannot see the reason of, which the Catholic system requires. We must trust Jesus Christ. He has not promised us any private inspiration; but He has promised to be always with His Church. It cannot hurt us that, in religious matters, we should have to take the word of a man whom we consider less capable than ourselves. It cannot even hurt us that we should take up, or acquiesce in, views of matters of fact which turn out to be erroneous. The advocates of "independence," "progress," and "science," will never admit this. But no man is bound by God's law to verify natural truth; whereas every man is bound to submit his

understanding to the captivity of Christ. Religion and science cannot really contradict one another ; but to our partial and limited vision they may at times seem to do so, and we are to cling to religion and authority. Bishops and Roman congregations may not move as quickly as could be desired, nor employ the precise procedure of a British law-court ; but the Gospel nowhere teaches that because the pastors of the Christian Church may be in some respects antiquated or behind the age, the child of the Church is absolved from dutiful submission and childlike faith. Catholics have a duty to persons and institutions as well as to their creed. To behave rudely, in word or deed, to prelates or priests, in the exercise of their office, is to be wanting in reverence to Christ. This is not the spirit of the world or of the worldly press ; but it is undoubtedly the spirit of the Gospel. The discussion, within strict limits, of religious matters is perfectly lawful to the laity ; even to express difference from the official utterances of a bishop or a priest may, under many circumstances, be allowed. But when there is any danger of scandal, of fostering disaffection, or embittering the minds of Catholics, even lawful discussion must be avoided. And certainly in no case can it be right to rebuke, to use injurious language, to sneer, or to utter threats or defiance. This may be hard ; it may even mean that a Catholic has to sit down quietly for a time under some injustice, and that less wise courses must sometimes go on unchecked. But we cannot possibly be mistaken in asserting that

it is the spirit of the Gospel. May these thoughts lead us all to learn Christ, to bow our heads without reserve or drawback to our holy religion as we find it, and so unite us more and more with Him who alone is our hope for eternity!

XIV

ON WORLDLINESS

The "World" is the sum and mass of evil tradition and practice—The first characteristic of the "World" is, Indifference to God and the soul, and the being contented with the present life—The second is, Pride and independence—The third is Sensuality, and recklessness in exposing ourselves to dangerous occasions of sensual sin.

To live for the next world—for eternity—is to live for Jesus Christ. To live for this world is to neglect, forget and contemn Him. It will always be a hard and anxious task for a man or woman to keep pure from the world whilst they live in the world. The difficulty lies partly in not knowing precisely what to think of the world, and partly in the strong attractiveness of the world. Let us say a few words, therefore, on Worldliness from both these points of view.

In what sense, then, is the world bad and dangerous? St. Paul calls the world a kingdom of darkness ruled by the devil. (Ephesians vi. 12). St. James urges Christians to keep themselves "unspotted from the world." (i. 27.) St. John cries out to us to "love not the world nor the things of the world." (1 John ii. 15.) Our Blessed Lord Himself, in more than one place, speaks of the world

as a force that is always hating and opposing Himself and His servants. In these passages, the "world" cannot mean the material universe, which was created by a good God, and constituted good and true to His designs. Physically speaking, the material universe is good, because God made it. Morally speaking, it is neither good nor bad, because it is without free-will, and therefore without responsibility. Neither the earth, therefore, nor its contents is evil in itself. Neither its gold nor its iron is bad by its own nature. None of those material things out of which pleasure is extracted or pride is created is an evil thing. The things of the earth, the sea, the air and the heavens may not seldom assume the character of temptation; nay, they may be, and doubtless are, in a certain degree under the malignant influence of evil spirits and of man's original fall. But in the adequate sense of the word they are not evil. It is not against them that our Lord inveighs, and the Apostles warn mankind.

The World—the evil, wicked, dangerous World—is a creation that owes its existence to the perverse minds and evil will of men. It is what the sinner does, and has done, that makes the World. The World is the result of the words and deeds of a thousand generations of sinful men; a result that is real, substantial and tangible at this very moment, in that human multitude who, now as heretofore, are making the "world," and keeping it up, as they in their turn have been made what they are by the

"world." Had there been only one generation of sinners, there would have been the World. Had there been sinners only in one region of the globe, there would have been the World. As so many ages have impregnated the very earth with sin, and as in the very age in which we live there is sin everywhere, therefore the World has always been, and the World is everywhere at this day. Pride, sensuality and selfishness have united to form and organise this dark kingdom which we call the World. Every man that has spoken or acted against God and the moral law has contributed a stone to build it up. Human language has embodied it, customs and fashions are its form and shape, communities witness in their history to its power, law has been captured by it, books uphold it, philosophies expound it, and men are found in every generation to be its sinister apostles. The many yield themselves up to it; whilst a smaller number, leaders in sin, devote themselves to strengthening its foundations and increasing its power.

Into this World came Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to save men from its snares and perils. His power and His word had preceded Him. Always from the beginning had there been witnesses to God, followers of His holy law, lifting their voices against wickedness, resisting evil principles and evil deeds, and ready to give up life itself rather than be unfaithful to their Creator. The beginnings of history had their Abel and their Enoch; the licence that preceded

the flood had its faithful Noe; there were Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the holy patriarchs of a later time. In Jewish history we read of Judges, Prophets, Kings, and Saints, from Moses to the martyred Machabees. All these were on God's side, against the World. Their beliefs, aspirations, principles, and lives were formed and inspired by the word and the spirit of God. And at length Jesus Christ our Saviour was revealed. At first, as St. John says, the "world knew Him not" (i. 10). Gradually, His light and truth made itself felt even by the scorner, the sensualist, and the sinner. The World began to see that there was a new leader in the field; the army of God was filled with a new courage—and then began that long and bitter war, never to cease whilst time goes on, between worldly wisdom and worldly practice, and that which we call, since Christ came, the spirit of the Gospel.

The principal marks or characteristics of the worldly spirit can be very easily stated. Perhaps the first and most obvious is that Indifference to God and their souls which turns men to the cultivation of this mortal life. With some, it means complete unbelief. With others, it means feebleness of faith, absence of thought, preoccupation with business, contentedness with the poor satisfactions offered by the senses, by social intercourse, by art or by culture. Indifference is a seed sown in the minds and hearts of children. The young who are

not educated in their religion never know enough about their religion to care for it. The young who are not taught to look to eternity, grow up hardly believing in eternity. In more mature life, men and women read everything except that which tells them of the world to come; they occupy themselves with everything except their immortal souls; they follow every one and listen to every one except the teachers of divine and supernatural truth. As a result, they live without adverting to things that are out of sight. They strive and they play in the market-place—but the doors of the temples are shut, and they have forgotten what there is within. This worldly spirit of Indifference, the God-fearing Christian must recognise as a practical and pressing danger to himself. No man can live among the indifferent and not run the risk of growing indifferent himself. The children of this world seek the things of this world. There is no way of being children of God except by resisting this fatal tendency, and arousing one's will and heart to seek the things of God. If a man study his religion, learn how sweet and lovely is God, how attractive is the Incarnation, how noble and fitting is all that relates to the Church and the Sacraments, that man may save himself from the epidemic of Indifference. If a man keep himself steady to his altar, and fail not in making a practical use of the religion that Christ has left, he may hope to escape the blight of worldly Indifference. But if he is slack in practical Catholicism, he may call himself what he

pleases, but he will be a worldly man. The creed he learnt in his childhood, the name he bears, and the faith of which, perhaps, he boasts, will not save him from living in neglect of his God and dying in danger of eternal damnation.

The second mark of the worldly spirit may be said to be Pride. Ever since the wicked angels fell, Pride has been the curse of spiritual and rational beings, and has turned them from their God. Pride means conceit, vainglory, disobedience, and rebellion. These evil dispositions characterise the world as we know it at this moment. Men will tell you they believe in a God; but they will reject with scorn the idea of obeying God's commands or those of His Church. They will tell you that what pass for God's commandments are probably nothing more than the ideas of men. They will protest that neither Church nor priest nor book has any title to command them; and they will declare that they intend to be free in thought, word and deed, so far as they do not interfere with civil society. We cannot too clearly and definitely face the fact that this spirit of disobedience and rebellion, vainglory, and pride in all its branches, is the exact contradiction of the spirit of Jesus Christ. It is the very essential mark of what He denounced as "the world." The impulse to refuse to obey, to scorn dictation, to criticise, and to set up as our own masters in religious and moral matters—this spirit may be natural; it may be extremely human; no doubt it is so. But we have to make our choice.

Either we give in to it, and then we range ourselves in the army that is opposing Christ; or we elect to be Christ's disciples, and then we must repress and resist it to the utmost. The Gospel spirit is that of humility, childlike docility and obedience. In all that concerns religion and morality, it is most essentially the Gospel spirit to obey, not only the commandments of God, but the instructions of men whom Christ has appointed to teach. Any man who rails at the priesthood, or is indifferent to the Church, is on the world's side. Any one who, in serious matters, judges, criticises, or condemns religious authority, is on the side of the world. Catholics must recognise, in the modern and actual developments of Pride, an actual and pressing danger. They are bound to separate themselves in these matters from the common and prevailing way and practice of those around them. Otherwise, they are in extreme peril of sharing in the condemnation pronounced on "the world" by our Lord, and of sacrificing their hopes of the world to come.

Only one other mark of the world need here be mentioned. It is that of Sensuality. As to this, it would seem that surely no Christian could fail to understand that to imitate the world in its impurity, its immodesty, its sinful indulgence, is to forsake Christ. And yet there are numbers of Catholics who do persuade themselves that a kind of compromise is possible; that they may go so far with the world, and yet not turn their backs on their Saviour. The

deadly sin of unchastity, in one or other of its kinds, is terribly common, as we all know; and it is not the less fatal and terrible because it is, to a certain degree, so carefully kept out of sight. To go into details here would be painful, and is perhaps needless. What pastors are bound to insist upon, is that self-restraint in this respect is absolutely essential. Temptation, or passion, may or may not diminish and palliate guilt; but any one who deliberately gives way, or gives up resistance, or abandons himself to sinful connections or depraved habits—such an one is a traitor to his Saviour. It will be no safeguard at the Judgment to say that you simply did what other people do. The "other people" whom you put forward are nothing else than that condemned "world" which Jesus Christ orders His followers to renounce. There can be no compromise. But there is a more subtle form of this deadly peril. There are those who, while not professing the creed of the libertine, will refuse to renounce the frequentation of places, the company of persons, and the reading of books, which are, plainly and experimentally, dangerous occasions of sin. These occasions occur under pretext, sometimes of necessity, sometimes of amusement, and sometimes of friendship. The following principles may here be laid down. If a thing is a grievous sin, we commit a grievous sin by exposing ourselves to the strong temptation of committing it. There are practically no exceptions to this rule, for the large majority of persons. Next, a thing that it

is a grievous sin to do, it is a grievous sin to desire, and even to dwell upon in thought. And, finally, no excuses of friendship, relationship, or company-keeping with a view to marriage, can make a thing not to be a sin which would be a sin under other circumstances. From these principles several consequences follow which should be well understood by all who wish to escape the condemnation of "the world," and to be secure before the Judgment of Jesus Christ. It is wrong to read books and newspapers which tend to excite the passions. We all know that the World has no scruple on this head; and also that writers of books and editors of papers too often unscrupulously pander to depraved tastes, and thus, whilst they are the cause of much sinful pleasure to their readers, teach the young in particular that lustful excitement is no harm. No doubt it is very difficult, under our modern conditions, to choose what to read, and to avoid all that is objectionable. But sin is sin, in spite of such difficulty. Therefore the effort has to be made, and the self-restraint and self-denial to be practised. Parents have a most serious duty not to allow books and newspapers indiscriminately in the house. Tradespeople are bound not to sell what is really bad. Young men and young women must be determined to avoid what is corrupting, and must absolutely give up what they find by experience has led them into sins of thought and desire. Again; there are, in every town, amusements that are productive of evil. The fact is—and it cannot be stated

too plainly—that the World does not recognise as wrong many actions, imaginations, desires, and situations, which the Catholic Church teaches to be grievously sinful. Hence it is quite possible that in the ordinary forms of amusement—such as theatricals, variety entertainments, dances, and some kinds of games—there may be grievous harm. The same may be said of company-keeping with or without a view to marriage. It is well known how strict an older generation was on these matters—and with good reason. It is certain that no pretence of custom, of altered times, of modern ideas, can make a thing lawful which is wrong in itself. A large number of "customs" in every generation are simply "the world"; "the world" which Jesus Christ has condemned. All professing Catholics are bound to recognise this, and to take precautions against the danger thus arising. If there be doubt or difficulty, an experienced confessor should be consulted; and every man or woman, young or old, should be prepared to renounce anything whatsoever rather than offend God.

It is a worthy way of preparing for the coming of our Lord, to enter into ourselves and to consider whether, and how far, we are living as followers of the World. Thus only can we prepare for that last and terrible "coming" when He is to divide the just from the unjust, and to smite "the world," the evil world, with His vengeance; whilst He gathers His children into that true and everlasting Kingdom which

we now look forward to as "the world to come." Let regular daily prayer, attendance at Mass, the frequentation of the Sacraments, and true Christian strictness of life, sanctify our lives and show in a practical way our sincere desire to live, not for this world but for the next—in the love of Jesus Christ, and by His grace Who hath overcome the World that we too might overcome.

XV

OUR CHURCHES

What a Church is—We must love our Churches, and show our solicitude for them—The sacrifices of Catholics for their Churches--We must frequent them, not only when we are bound to hear Mass, but with pious affection whenever we can--The Catholic ideal a Church open all day long.

A CHURCH is a serious responsibility for pastors and for people. Our Churches, even the humblest of them, are not meeting-houses. They are the tabernacle of the Lord of Hosts—the house of the sacrificial Altar, and the home of the Blessed Sacrament. Within their walls the Sacraments of the New Law, like perennial fountains, dispense the inexhaustible grace of God. Under their roof the sinner prays and the Divine Mercy stoops from heaven to lift him from his misery. There God's holy word is heard, with its consoling hopes, its warnings, its attractions, and its living power. There the child is brought to have the mark of Christ put on its forehead; there the man and the maiden, with joined hands, give one another their solemn promise; and thither the mortal remains of the departed Christian are carried when the day of his pilgrimage has closed, to lie awhile in presence of the cross and the altar, before they are laid beneath the earth. Thus the Church is the house of God and the gate of Heaven.

But we must remember that a Church is a church only to those who know what it is and use it right. The stones of God's house have no magic power to save us or to help us if our own hearts do not share in the work. The most holy Sacrament itself, which is true, real, and Divine even when men utterly neglect and forget it, does not give life save to those who believe and pray. In order to use a Church as it should be used, we must love it, and we must frequent it.

What it is to love a Christian church we can see in the example offered us by Catholic countries. In Rome, for instance, and indeed in every town of Italy, of France, of Spain, of Belgium, and of the rest of Catholic Europe, one sees churches old and new. In the older churches there are always striking signs of long-continued care and lavish sacrifice. You see large churches, adorned with every kind of precious marble, with gold, silver, and bronze, with grand altars, with rich chapels, with carving, statuary and pictures, some of them by the greatest artists of the world. You are told how, for scores and hundreds of years, the rich and powerful, as well as the humble and the poor, have been adding to the beauty and richness of the interior and exterior; how such a family gave that chapel, such a confraternity erected that altar; how a great noble offered precious vestments, and a devout merchant presented gold and silver plate. Some of these churches have been plundered during the long years they have stood and

borne witness to God; but the very stones, which spoilers cannot move, cry out and testify to the devotion which has cherished them. And each day, at the dawn of light, the masses go on at their numerous altars and the devout people come in to pray; each day the patient priests sit in their confessionals; each day loving hands keep the lamps lighted and the flowers fresh. When the solemn festivals of the Christian year come round, their great doors open wide to the thronging people, and lights, music, and many tokens of rejoicing welcome the crowd of worshippers. When each Church keeps its own special feasts—either the day of its consecration, or the festival, perhaps, of some martyred saint whose name it bears and whose body lies beneath its altar—then from every part come devout multitudes to honour the holy place, and to seek those special graces which are offered to all who pray within its walls. Thus a great Church comes to be a considerable part of the life and traditions of a Catholic people. Their fathers have lived and died round about it; its pavement is as familiar to them as their own home; its ancient walls and towers have a place in their annals; and they love it as they love the hills and fields, the rivers and the sea of their native land.

When we turn from the grand and glorious churches of Catholic countries to our own Churches and Chapels, we may well feel a pang of envy or of regret. The noble churches of this country have been taken from

their proper use, and stand, most of them, bare, cold, and desolate. Faith would have reared other churches during the last three hundred years, had the country been Catholic, and the people would have clung to them as devotedly as other nations have done. But the storm has passed over the land, and we have had first of all to bow our heads to it, and then to repair the ruin it has left. Our churches are few, and mostly poor. Sometimes the same building serves for the schooling of the children during the week and for the assembling of the faithful on the Sunday. Still, the Churches are there; and it is the duty of pastors and of people to love them and to cherish them. A Church may be humble, but that is no reason why it should be dirty and neglected. The people should remember that even cleanliness costs money, and that the priest cannot keep his Church as it should be unless his flock help him to do it. If the loving solicitude of the people seconded the zeal of the pastor, our Churches would soon look less bare and forlorn; the walls would be warm with colours, the images of our Lady and the Saints would welcome the worshipper, the altar would be becoming and even rich, the lamp of the Blessed Sacrament would be an ornament to the sanctuary, and the linen, the vestments, and all the accessories of liturgical worship would be so good and so worthy of their sacred purpose as to fill the beholders with edification. There are some congregations, as we are well aware, where the beauty of God's house is

an object of primary anxiety, and where sacrifices are not grudged. God will bless those altar societies, and those individual workers, who give their means and their time to the altar and the sanctuary.

The love of one's Church leads to the frequenting of Church. In Catholic countries the people come to their Church because they love it; whereas, amongst us, it too often happens that Catholics attend merely because it is Sunday—that is, in too many cases, because other people attend. It is true that the only time we are strictly bound to appear at Church is on Sundays and Holydays, for Mass; but how much more regular, how much more joyful and devout would even that attendance be if we really loved the Church! But the true Catholic is not content with coming to Church on the Sunday. The Catholic ideal is a Church open all day long, with people going in and out, from the early Masses to the ringing of the evening *Ave*. In this country, for want of custodians, and for other reasons, the Churches cannot everywhere be kept open; but this again depends in great measure on the zeal of the flock. How beautiful and Catholic it is for the passer-by to enter the Church and make a short visit to the Blessed Sacrament!—to pray a moment before Our Lady's altar, or to reverence the holy patron Saints! How strengthening to the workman or the poor labouring woman to offer up in the morning the day's work and trouble, and beg for grace, or to kneel a few minutes in the evening in the light of

the sanctuary lamp, and ask for pardon and consolation! The Christian soul grows in the shadow of the altar. The Christian heart learns Christ under the roof of the sanctuary. And in those most profitable and attractive week-day evening services, which the zeal of the clergy are now making so much more frequent, how many good resolutions are formed, how many secrets are learned, and how much reparation is made for the sinfulness of the world! Or again, when the days come for the long liturgical services—during the Holy Week functions, or even during the ordinary High Mass—whenever the priest, as it were, enters into the Holy of Holies, and the people, as of old, stand without—then they who love their Church know how to make use of those moments of silence and recollection. They know that the very first and deepest duty of their hearts is to worship God; and they feel that it is just those times of solemn calm which are best fitted to lift them up towards Heaven in acts of adoration and praise, of thanksgiving and desire. Let us love, then, that Church where we worship. Let us be glad and proud to accept our share of the responsibility of keeping it up. Let us strive to understand it, and every part and purpose of it; and especially to make ourselves familiar with the altar which stands in the midst of it, and thus learn to make some return to Almighty God for all His mercies in thus vouchsafing to dwell in the midst of His people.

XVI

THE HOLY FAMILY

The Christian family described ; its beauty and sanctity—No family can be Christian or holy without religion—Especially must there be intelligent solicitude for the welfare of the children ; divine admonitions on this subject—Every family has an example, an instruction, and an attraction in the Holy Family of Nazareth—The threefold light, of the presence of God, of mutual love, and of general edification—The two forms of devotion to the Holy Family.

The late Holy Father Pope Leo XIII. told us a few years ago that he was convinced that nothing will tend more to check the spirit of worldliness and of licentiousness, to make men contented with their lot, and to bring back Christian faith and charity, than the contemplation of that Holy Family of Nazareth, which was divinely established to be the model and example of all families. And, on the other hand, a pious and tender devotion to Jesus, Mary and Joseph, could not fail, he said, to draw down on every family which consecrates itself to them that help and those graces which will make them worthy of such glorious Patrons and Protectors.

All pastors know and feel what the Sovereign Pontiff so emphatically says is true. If you sanctify the Family, you sanctify the community ; whilst, if

family life becomes corrupt, you may despair of the life of the nation.

The father, the mother, and the children, make up that divine and sacred institution of God which is called the Christian Family. In the Family we have the most primary of human relationships, arising out of primitive nature itself; a "society" on which all society rests; a society and relationship which God has sanctioned and blessed in a thousand ways, and which ought to be the strongest, the sweetest, and the holiest upon earth.

In the fear of God the young man and the young woman join their hands before the altar of God, promising each other perpetual trust and truth. They henceforth belong to one another and to God. They have their home apart— their bed and board, a door to shut out the world, a fireside to call their own. The father shares his earnings with his wife and children; the wife labours for all; the children look to the hand of the father and mother for all their wants and all their enjoyments. If prosperity blesses them, they all rejoice alike and equally partake of it; if bad times come and adversity visits the home, they meet it together and bear one another's burdens. As the years go on, they do their best to keep all together, facing the world in unity and affection, knowing one another, trusting one another, standing each by the other. The husband and father has to toil with his head or his hands; it is the thought of his wife and children at home that makes him brave

and patient, and it is his best reward to be welcomed back by those to whom he is more than all the world beside. The wife, the mother, with all her troubles and strivings, never forgets who it is to whom she gave her heart in the early days, and she is ready to sacrifice herself for him and to believe in him to the last. Together they watch their children grow in body and develop in mind—happy yet anxious; thanking God for the wonders of life and intelligence, yet fearing for themselves in the responsibility which is laid upon them. Thus the little community lives through a generation, till the years as they pass on bow the father's back and dim the mother's eyes, and the children whom God gave them are fathers and mothers themselves, with a roof-tree of their own, and God's dispensations to carry out in their turn as their parents before them.

The beauty—and we may add the sanctity—of the Christian home, which ought to beautify and sanctify the whole world and every generation of the world's history, are too often marred and spoilt. This we all know too well. But we are at no loss to understand what is the reason why sometimes the Family is so noble and worthy a sight for men and angels, and at other times so lamentable and miserable a failure. No home can stand unless it is built on a solid foundation. No family can be worthy of God and of Jesus Christ unless it stands upon Religion. Religion must be first and foremost, or else there is no order, no fidelity, no dignity, no

success. The family of an unbeliever may be respectable in the world's eyes, and outwardly prosperous. But the day is coming when the tide must ebb, and the souls who lived for earth and for time will realise their loss, when time is no more and earth has passed away. Children who are brought up without God are not brought up, but blinded and maimed and cast out. A husband who does not believe in God is a man who will live for himself, and not for his wife or his little ones. A mother who cannot teach her boys and girls to pray remains half a stranger to them to the end. She may clothe them, and caress them, and instruct them—but she can never enter into the Holy of Holies where the immortal soul speaks to its Maker. It is Religion alone which lifts the eyes of fathers and mothers to heaven and to eternity, and thus teaches them that the only true education they can give their children is to educate them for life everlasting. But what shall we say of those who know and believe in God and in holy Religion, and yet by negligence, bad example, and culpable laziness, do as much to ruin their children as if they were heathens or atheists? What shall we say of responsible fathers and mothers, such as priests know too well, who drink, curse, and quarrel in the very sight of their children—who never kneel to pray, never come to Mass or Sacraments—who allow their children to desecrate the Sunday, to stay away from school, to live in the streets and to grow up ignorant, disreputable, and

vicious? Let us, for the moment, only say this—that such fathers and mothers are doing their best to destroy the Kingdom of God, purchased by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. For the children are the future. To neglect them and to ruin them is to fight against God Himself; for He looks for the day when they will be good men and good women; but their miserable parents are carrying out the will of the devil, and bringing up God's own little ones to be men and women like themselves, who will live as if there were no God at all.

In speaking of what is good or bad in a family, we are naturally led to think chiefly of the children. The truth is, that fathers and mothers will be good or bad, virtuous or wicked, in proportion as they understand and fulfil their duties to their children. Let the word "understand" be well observed. There are far too many Catholic parents, and those not of the poorest class, who have not taken into their minds what they owe to God in connection with the children whom God has entrusted to them. Many look upon their children as playthings, as drudges, as mouths to be fed, as encumbrances, or at best as naturally lovable possessions. But children are immortal souls, and parents are God's ministers to those souls. There is no ministry of God in this world which has a more direct Divine sanction than that of the father and mother of a family. There are none into whose hands God so completely puts Himself as those of a parent. The priest handles the Body and

Blood of our Lord and dispenses His holy Word ; this ministry is more Divine by the nature of its object. But the office of a parent is more ancient than any priesthood ; and, by the nature of things, it is more fundamental. The institution of marriage is the oldest institution in the world. The relations and duties which arise from marriage are, therefore, primitive and Divine in a most strict sense. For it is not merely the bodies of the children, or their physical condition and welfare, that are committed to the responsibility of the parent, but it is their immortal souls. The child is the future citizen of heaven. He is the end and purpose of God's creation, the subject of Christ's redemption, the anxiously-loved object of the heavenly Father's solicitude. Yet God does not visibly interfere. The child is born, and both God and man leave it to its parents. Man leaves it to them because, even if men were so mad as to wish by their laws to disturb the natural connection of mother and child, they could not do it. And God leaves it to them because it is the order of His Providence that His work should be done by human hands. The child has to be brought to the knowledge of its Maker and of its last end, to be made to discern good from evil, to be disciplined to self-restraint, and to be instructed in things Divine. But God does not do this by personal interference. He does not descend and carry away into His own keeping that being which is so dear to Him. He does not put it to a school where it can see His law

written across the heavens, or hear His commandments in thunder and lightning. He does not even send His Angels—those ministers of His who are ever ready at His orders—to teach little children ; although the Angels have their ministry too, and a ministry much nearer to children than we are accustomed to think. He holds back His hand—He keeps silence—He gives no sign to His heavenly host. It is to the father and the mother that He leaves that body and soul of His little one. If it is to be taught, to be turned towards heaven, to be sanctified and saved, it is they who must do the work. If *they* do not carry it to the baptismal font, it will not be baptized ; if *they* do not instruct it, by their own labour, by taking it to the priest, and by sending it to a Catholic school, it will not be instructed ; if *they* do not see that it approaches the sacraments, the chances are that no sacraments will sanctify it. On the other hand, if the parents keep it in darkness, and bring it up in wickedness amid bad example, then that soul will be lost, and it is *they* who will have its blood upon their head.

Our heavenly Father is very "zealous" in regard to all those who do harm to their neighbours' souls, or who do not, as far as lies within their power, help them to be saved. There are two chief reasons for this : one is, that the most sure test of one's love for God is to be ready to benefit those souls which are so dear to Him. The other is, that, considering what human nature is, it is not too much to say that

a man's salvation depends entirely on the persons around him. It is true that a man must save his own soul, and that he *can* save his soul in spite of his surroundings. But it is true, all the same, as a general rule, that he is saved or eternally ruined by the words, the advice, the persuasion, and the example of those among whom his lot is cast. Hence the "zeal" of Almighty God in regard to those who are not solicitous about their neighbour. If God has committed His immortal creatures to the influence of their fellow-creatures, how can He not be interested in their fulfilling this awful trust? But with parents and their children all these considerations exist in double strength. For a child is most certainly either saved to God, or given to the devil, by its father and mother. A child uncared for in its childhood is a child lost. There may be exceptions, but this is what is true in the immense majority of cases. It is no wonder, then, if Almighty God is prepared with His awful judgments on parents who neglect their duty to His little ones. For, let us remember, they are *His* little ones. The children belong to God first; they are only entrusted and lent to their fathers and mothers. In the ancient Jewish times, the holy and good parents used to say that their children were God's gifts. "These are the children whom God hath given me" (Genesis xxxiii. 5). Among God's people the children standing round the table were likened to the shoots of the fruitful olive tree—a sign of God's benediction (Ps. cxxvii. 3). If in the New

Testament there are higher graces than the bearing of children, yet none the less are children still the dear pledges of His love and the trust of His fatherly Providence. You know the emphatic and remarkable words in which our Blessed Lord speaks of the little ones whom He caressed and blessed. They are in the special charge, He tells us, of Angels—Angels who ever stand before the face of God (Matt. xviii. 10). Against those who lead them into sin, or who harm their immortal souls, He denounces the vengeance of God; it were better, He says, that a millstone had been tied about their neck and that they were drowned in the depths of the sea (Luke xvii. 2). For there is a special cruelty in scandalising children. They cannot help themselves. They have neither the strength of mind, nor the information, nor the experience necessary to enable them to resist evil impressions. They are in the hands of their elders, and especially in the hands of their parents. Therefore, as they are so precious in the sight of the Heavenly Father and of His Angels, retribution will not be wanting on those who harm them. Do you think it possible that the powers of Heaven should spare such people? You have heard how the legislature of this country, especially in very recent days, has interfered in behalf of children, made it possible for them all to be taught, regulated their hours of labour, and passed a severe enactment to protect them from cruelty. Can we for a moment suppose that the Father of Heaven is less interested in the souls of these little ones

than men on earth are about their bodies? If kind-hearted men are solicitous about the years of their mortality, what must be God's solicitude about their everlasting salvation? Let all men look to it therefore. Most of all, let parents look to it; for, if there is any law and any certainty, it is certain that the sin of those who neglect their children will find them out.

Such being the responsibility of the parents in regard to their children, no preparation can be too careful, no earnestness can be too great, in order to live worthily in the holy state of marriage. Hearts united, and united in God—such must be the hearts of husband and wife. The love and service of God must sanctify the house; and, where that love and service reign, no house, however humble, can fail to be holy and admirable. God is our creator, our loving father and our only friend. In Him, and in Him alone, can husband and wife truly love one another, help one another, and bear with one another. To Him they must lift their hearts in the morning and the evening; to Him they must offer their employment and every word and act. For His sake must temperance, sobriety, and self-restraint make their lives edifying to men and beautiful in the sight of the Angels. For His sake must they seek the Church, and frequent that Sacrifice and those sacraments in which the fountains of Divine Grace are ever open and abundantly flowing for the benefit of the souls of men. Thus, for the sake of God, and by the strength of God, they will watch over,

bring up and prepare for God's service those children with whom He may bless them.

It should not be very difficult for Christian believers to love and honour God. It is true that men and women, especially in the married state, are subject to many trials and many temptations. But, if they really wish to live God-fearing lives, God has made it easy for them. For by His Incarnation He has come very near to us; and we have only to turn to Bethlehem, to Nazareth, to Calvary, in order to understand Him, and to be drawn to Him with all our hearts. Above all, He has deigned to give to the Christian Family an example, an instruction and an attraction such as He has given no other institution on earth. For He has so bowed down His majesty as to have lived in a family Himself. He chose most holy Mary for his mother, and St. Joseph for His foster-father; and with them, in the humble house at Nazareth, He lived for the greater part of His earthly life. That holy House, though it stood unnoticed among the cottages of the little town, was illuminated in the sight of heaven by a glory unspeakable. There fell upon it from the heavens a triple ray of light, brilliant and divine, such cannot be found on earth. First, there was the light of God's Presence. Jesus was there; and the hearts of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph lived in the thought of God, of heaven, and of eternity. Next, there was the light of mutual love and devotedness. St. Joseph laboured, watched, and suffered for Jesus and Mary;

the Virgin Mother had given her whole being to Her Son—her thought, her will, her feelings, and her every act ; reflecting and repeating in her own heart all His sufferings for the world's redemption, and standing by Him in the work of His Father as the most faithful "minister" He has ever had (John xii. 26). Jesus, on His side, though Master and Lord, was subject and obedient, accepting work, submitting to teaching, sharing in every hardship, and devoting Himself wholly to Mary and Joseph ; and this in order that all generations might learn how holy and blessed a thing it is to obey, to be obscure, to be poor, and to suffer. Lastly, there was the light of a holy and edifying life. Kindness to all, self-denial, modesty, speech purer than that of Angels, justice, and all the virtues which adorn a life blameless in the sight of men—this was what those round about witnessed in the life of the Holy Family.

It is easy to understand that this heavenly effulgence which shone upon the holy House of Nazareth is intended to shed its rays upon every house where father, mother, and children are gathered together. Every Christian family should live in the presence of God ; in the constant presence of the world above, and the thought of the eternity to come. Every family should seek and cherish that love of one another and that mutual devotedness, which we witness in Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. And every family should so live as to edify all men by a good, pure, sober, and honest life. Where, then, shall Christian

families find an easier means of thus living like Jesus, Mary and Joseph, than in the constant contemplation of the Holy Family itself, with devout prayer and loving imitation?

This is a devotion which has been widely propagated in recent times. It has been sanctioned and amply explained in the Letter of Pope Leo XIII., beginning "*Neminem fugit*," dated June the 14th, 1891.

The Pious Association of the Holy Family is an association of families who consecrate themselves to the Holy Family of Nazareth. These families undertake to honour Jesus, Mary and Joseph in their life at Nazareth, and to imitate the virtues of which they give to the world so admirable an example. Once a day at least—and that in the evening, if possible —they undertake to gather round a representation of the Holy Family, and to pray in common before it; the prayer which is recommended is the one printed at the end of this letter, beginning "O most loving Jesus." The "representation" here spoken of may be a simple picture of the Holy Family, or any picture, or group of statuary, representing Jesus in the hidden life which He led with Mary and Joseph. In order to become members of the Pious Association, a family must be enrolled by their priest, and must make the Act of Consecration, the form of which is printed at the end of this Letter. The consecration may be made either privately, or by several families together in the Church.

There is another form of the devotion, especially

promoted by the Redemptorist Fathers, which received a fresh approbation from Pope Leo XIII. in a letter dated May 7, 1894. This is more adapted for the enrolment of individuals, whilst the former is suited to families.

In solemnly recommending to the faithful this practice of devotion to the Holy Family, our Holy Father the Pope has in view, as he has stated, to sanctify every family by the example of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, by the grace of Our Lord and the intercession of His Blessed Mother and His reputed father. But he has aimed at another good purpose as well. He has shown his earnest desire to see the revival throughout the Church of family night-prayers. Prayer is an imperative obligation, for without prayer no one can save his soul. More than once a day should father, mother and children pray, and, if possible, pray together. But at least in the evening, when the day's toil is over, when sins have to be asked pardon for, and renewed protection implored, the family should meet in family prayer. How appropriately, at that moment, do they gather round the image of the Holy Family! What sweet thoughts of the meek and humble Jesus, of the most pure Virgin and the faithful St. Joseph, will soften the hearts of all in that hour, and turn their desires to heavenly things! What a desirable way of remembering that God whom during their whole life they have too much forgotten! What a consolation will it be at the hour of death to recall those evening

prayers, those moments of peace, recollection and good desires, which sanctified and consecrated each day as it ended !

That this devotion will be widely taken up cannot be doubted. It has the express recommendation of the Holy Father, who has granted numerous Indulgences to all who are enrolled in either Association. It is not too much to say that it is a devotion which is capable of transforming the face of the world. If Catholic families, both rich and poor, enter into it with earnestness and zeal, it will not be long before the prophecy of the Sovereign Pontiff is fulfilled, and faith and piety revive throughout the Christian flock. Jesus will bless those who honour His poor, obscure and lowly life at Nazareth ; and the powerful prayers of Mary and of Joseph will guard and protect father, mother and children. What is begun in the Catholic flock will spread to those around. Were there lively faith and true piety amongst ourselves, there could not fail to be a great harvest of conversions. The power of Jesus is no less than it ever was ; but it is tied and hindered by the sinfulness, the ignorance, the indifference of those who profess His holy faith and belong to His one true Church. He does not convert souls unless we lift Him up for all men to see ; the idols of Egypt do not fall down unless His own household carry Him into the land where they are. May Jesus, Mary and Joseph bring into the midst of every Catholic family the spirit of true religion and of solid piety, and the steadfast keeping

of the Divine commandments, that the light of Christ may save us, and may save our neighbours round about us, and bring us all to life everlasting !

Form of Consecration of a Christian Family to the Holy Family

O Jesus, our most loving Redeemer, who didst come into the world to enlighten it by Thy teaching and by Thy example, and who didst will to pass the greater part of Thy mortal life in the poor cottage of Nazareth, in humble subjection to Mary and Joseph, thus sanctifying that Family which was to be the model of all Christian families ; graciously receive this family which dedicates and consecrates itself to Thee this day. Do Thou protect us, do Thou watch over us. Do Thou bestow upon us Thy holy fear, peace, concord, and Christian love ; that so, by the imitation of Thy Family as our pattern and model, we may each and all obtain everlasting happiness.

O Mary, loving Mother of Jesus, and our Mother, by thy gracious intercession make this humble dedication acceptable to Jesus, and obtain for us His graces and blessings.

St. Joseph, holy Guardian of Jesus and Mary, assist us by thy prayers in all our spiritual and temporal necessities ; so that, with Mary and with thee, we may for all eternity bless and thank our Divine Redeemer, Jesus. Amen.

Prayer for daily recitation before a Representation of the Holy Family

O most loving Jesus, Who by Thy ineffable virtues and by the example of Thy domestic life didst consecrate the Family which Thou didst choose on earth, in Thy clemency look down upon this household humbly prostrate before Thee and imploring Thy mercy. Remember that this family belongs to Thee, for to Thee we have in a special way dedicated and devoted ourselves. Look upon us in Thy loving kindness, preserve us from every danger, give us help in the time of need, and grant us the grace to persevere to the end in the imitation of Thy Holy Family; that, having revered Thee and loved Thee faithfully on earth, we may bless and praise Thee eternally in heaven.

O Mary, most sweet Mother, to thy intercession we have recourse, knowing that thy Divine Son will hear thy prayers.

And do thou, O glorious Patriarch St. Joseph, assist us by thy powerful mediation, and offer by the hands of Mary our prayers to Jesus.

XVII

PARENTS AND THEIR DUTIES

Parents the cause of their children's sins—The duty of bodily care and constant watchfulness—The need of a home—Attendance at Sunday Mass, and at the Catechism—Regularity at school—Children who have left school.

THERE is no anxiety that presses more painfully on a pastor at this present time than that which is caused by the behaviour of parents towards their children. Saint Alfonso, one of the greatest shepherds of souls that ever lived, said, of his own times, that there could be no doubt that, generally speaking, parents are the causes of the sins of their children. This is as true now as then; nay, it is still more certain, at the present day, than ever it has been in any other Christian age, that whatever there is of wickedness, of depravity, of religious indifference, in children, is owing to the neglect or the bad example of parents. The truth is, that in these modern days no one dares to step in between a parent and his child. There is an attempt made to force the child to some kind of secular school. There is also, it must be admitted, some provision made by recent legislation for removing a neglected child from the parents' keeping. But such police regulations as these can never suffice,

of themselves, to make children good Christians ; first, because they are never put in force till the mischief is in some degree done ; and, secondly, because they leave out, almost entirely, the only remedy which can either cure a faulty child or keep a well-disposed one straight, that is, religious teaching, religious observance, and the Christian sacraments. As to these things, and nearly everything else, the parents are secure from all interference. They can spoil their children or starve them ; they can have them instructed or leave them heathens ; they can watch over them or let them run about the streets, and neither priest nor magistrate has anything to say, until some crying scandal puts the law in motion. And what can the law do, or what has it done ?

The first duty of parents to their children is to feed and clothe them. Having before us the most painful fact, that in all our large towns there are scores and hundreds of children who run about in rags and dirt, and are visibly only half-fed, it is absolutely necessary to face the question—How far does this state of things lie at the door of the fathers and mothers of families ? Poverty is a condition blessed by the words and example of Jesus Christ. But abject, criminal, and degraded poverty He neither blessed nor practised, because such poverty, far from helping men to draw nearer to God, makes the practice of religion almost impossible. Sometimes it has to be endured. It is too true that, in every country, in every generation, there has been, and are,

such things as destitution and famine. These things are, beyond all doubt, as great a curse as pestilence and slavery; they cause people to lose their souls, and only a rare and heroic character here and there can make such scourges profitable to life everlasting. Is the sad and pitiable condition of so many children in Cardiff, Newport, Swansea, Merthyr, Dowlais, or Pontypool, a miserable necessity, or is it not? The slightest knowledge of the facts will show that it is not. Work and wages may be subject to uncertainty, and the hire of labour may not be munificent. But, making all allowances, it is certain that there is no working community in South Wales where there might not be a fair level of comfort and decency. Then why do we find so many dark spots on the map, where decency is a stranger and comfort is unknown? The answer is only too easy to give. It is because the wages are wasted and squandered in drink. It is because the hard-earned money that ought to keep a comfortable home is spent in a kind of self-indulgence which kills spiritual life, darkens and degrades physical life, and makes a mockery of the altar and the Gospel. If these words reach the ears of men and women who habitually yield to this fatal temptation, and yet who are not altogether reckless, let them put foremost among all the motives for reformation the duty that they owe to their children. It is not only that the drunken parent—father or mother—robs tender and growing children of the food and the comfort which they must have, or else

they grow up pale, stunted and diseased, listless at school, and ashamed to go to Church. It is that, besides starving them, they neglect to watch over and protect their morals. Protection! What kind of protection is to be looked for from selfish, besotted and passionate parents who are incapable for a large part of their waking hours of either affection or religious purpose, or even of rational ideas? Naturally, the unhappy children of such parents shirk the school, know nothing about the Church, and escape whenever they can from their miserable homes into the street. There they learn idleness, gambling, cheating, stealing, and every kind of blackguardism. There they qualify for the police-court, and too often for the gaol and for penal servitude, or worse. There they forget their baptism, lose all sense of their holy religion, and contribute to swell that population of the vicious and the brutal which honest men have to protect themselves against. Parents can see that this is true. Every father and mother knows of cases where all this has been verified. Is it not a strong and appealing reason why every one with a spark of human feeling in his breast, should make a stern resolve to have no part in such a wrecking of God's creation, and be determined to resist the drink-passion?

And perhaps it may here be permitted to say, that it is not only the drinking parents who allow their children to run wild. Is it not true that we find this lamentable absence of care and supervision even

among those who are more or less sober and decent? Children require a home, or their better nature never has a fair chance. They need kindness and affection; they require guidance, every hour, in things innumerable, none of which, perhaps, are, singly, of any great importance, but which, taken altogether, are the material out of which are formed their habits for life. Not only must they be guarded from the infection of bad example, and coarse language; not only must they be protected from cruelty and rough usage—but they must feel something of the purifying, elevating and improving effect of a quiet and a virtuous life. They must live with good people, or they will not be good; they must live with pious people, or they will never understand what piety means; they must live with upright and honest people, or they will not learn to value honour or honesty. That means, that unless their parents look after them, and unless their parents are good, honest, virtuous and religious, the children will never be what God intends them to be. They will be like precious flowers which ought to be kept in a sheltered garden, but which a fool takes and throws out on the roadside, to pine away and perish. Therefore all fathers and mothers are bound to have, and to keep up, some kind of a home, where their children may have a chance of growing up to be good Christians and respectable men and women; where the grace of their baptism may spread through their being and produce its beautiful fruits, and where the good

faculties and dispositions implanted in them by their Creator may strengthen and expand according to His holy will. If it be objected that a home of this kind is beyond the means of poor labouring people, the answer is, that it is not the means, but the will that is wanting. The wages of all working people ought to be sufficient to keep up a modest home; and in this country, with few exceptions, they are sufficient, if properly used. But the truth is that a large number of our people never put before themselves this view of the obligations of a parent. Many have a kind of vague idea that if they feed and clothe their children, send them to school, and perhaps to church, and scold or strike them when they misbehave, they have nothing further to answer for. But they make a lamentable mistake. Every parent is bound to form his or her child's mind, soul, and character, by word, by action, and by example. This responsibility no one can take off the parents' shoulders. The priest has his duties to the little ones of the flock, and so have the teachers, and the civil law; but none of them can relieve the parents of theirs. You will say that this is hard, and that many of you are poor, uneducated people, who cannot be expected to do much in the way of training a child. This brings us to what is, perhaps, the root of the matter. What right have men and women to marry who are so utterly unfit to have the care of children? Do not misunderstand. The poor are not expected to have learning, or plenty

of time, or money in abundance. But no man or woman has a right to marry without being—or being determined to be—sober, industrious, and prudent; without being—or being determined to be—a good practical Catholic; and without being sufficiently instructed to know to what our holy religion binds us all, and what is meant by loving, serving, and obeying Almighty God. To marry in any other dispositions or condition is to run a risk of profaning the Sacrament of Matrimony, and of incurring the awful doom pronounced by our Lord on those who "give scandal to little ones." For assuredly such persons are utterly unfitted to deal with children, and will most likely so neglect, spoil, and even corrupt those whom God may give them, that their children will lose their immortal souls. It will be hard enough, in the day of judgment, to have to answer for our own souls—but God help those who, in that awful hour, have to answer for the souls of their children!

Besides the responsibilities which parents have as regards the home and home-life, there are others, as you do not need to be reminded, connected with the Church and the School.

To speak first of the Church; it is often very painful to notice, that, of the children above seven years old—even of those who attend school—sometimes not more than half, or even a third, appear at Mass on the Sunday. Reasons may be given for this; but there can be no doubt that one chief reason

is that the parents do not come themselves. In some missions the children of the School are assembled and brought to Mass by their teachers. In others they are left to the parents. And there are always older boys and girls who have left school, but who are still with their father and mother. But whatever the teachers, or the Sisters, or the priest may do to bring the children to Mass, let parents make no mistake—it is they who have to answer for it. This does not mean that a working man and his wife have to do impossibilities; but they have to take proper and reasonable care that all their children, who have come to years of discretion, attend Mass on Sunday, either with the teachers, or with themselves (the parents), or in some way. Otherwise, the sin of missing Mass on the Sunday, which is a grievous and mortal sin, will fall upon the parents. It may be, perhaps, that the true Christian and Catholic way is for the children to attend Mass with their parents. But in many places the pastor is obliged to make a different arrangement—and this, in great measure, owing to the indifference of the parents themselves. What abundance of divine blessing is given to a good and pious family attending Mass all together on our Lord's holy day! How the little ones, as soon as they can understand or use a book, are gently and gradually accustomed by the mother to follow the parts of the Holy Sacrifice, to bow their heads in adoration at the elevation, and to make a spiritual communion when the priest receives the

sacred Body and Blood! And how, by degrees, this solemn Sunday duty, with its accompanying prayer and the hearing of the Word of God, becomes, as the young people grow up, the habit and custom of their lives, never to be given up as long as they live! All priests would like to see parents bringing up their children thus. But they often have to take the matter in hand themselves. That is why you see the children brought in a body to Mass, placed where they can follow what goes on at the Altar, and in many places led through the Mass, with instruction, prayer and singing, by a priest. For all priests know that there is nothing so important as to teach the children, from their early years, what the holy Mass means, and how to follow it. It is upon this that the salvation of their souls in great measure depends. Oh that parents would understand and remember it!

With the Church is connected the Sunday Catechism. Let all parents do their best to make their children attend this. The priests of the diocese are anxious to make the Sunday Catechism pleasant, useful, and not too long. Catechism in the Church is a different thing from Catechism that is given merely in the School. In the School the child learns ; in the Church it feels that it is listening to the word of its Heavenly Father—to the teaching of Jesus Christ. In the Church the child begins to understand that religious instruction is not merely getting things by heart, but learning to love God and to imitate our

Lord. In the Church the Catechism is much more than Catechism; it is piety and devotion. It is consoling to see the grown-up people, the fathers and mothers of the faithful generally, attending the Sunday Catechism. When the priest speaks to the children, or asks them questions before everybody, the people learn too, and are reminded of many things that they would otherwise neglect and forget. And certainly every one who has children ought to feel happy and proud to see them standing up before the altar, repeating their prayers, and learning to love and serve God.

With regard to the School, it is not necessary, perhaps, to say over again, here, what every pastor has to say so often. The important thing, now, is to secure regular attendance, and poor people are not asked for any school fees. Parents, then, ought to be ashamed of themselves if they do not see that their children come to School regularly and in good time. We must all remember that the School is a very great anxiety to the priest of a mission. Things are better, no doubt, than they have been; that is to say, the situation would by this time have become simply intolerable. Even now, what with building, repairs, enlargements, more space, and larger playgrounds, the School in every mission makes large demands on the solicitude and the begging-power of the pastor. When, with all this, you find that parents are remiss and indifferent, and do not even take the trouble to make sure of their children walk-

ing in at the open door of a school which, if they had not got it, they would be bound to contribute their hard-earned money to provide—then, indeed, the priest feels inclined to despair of his people. Encourage and console your priests, dear children in Jesus Christ, by making the very best use of your excellent schools. In order that the little ones may be in time, and may never miss, the mother and the elder sisters must practise several virtues. They must be up in good time; they must be industrious and diligent in getting everything ready for the husband and the workers, and for the children themselves; and they must be careful and economical, so that a proper breakfast may not be wanting, and the boys and girls may go off to their important duties with stomachs full and hearts encouraged—decent, clean, and happy. Homely words, my Brethren in Jesus Christ; but if we understand the spirit of the holy House of Nazareth, it is these homely cares that our Heavenly Father blesses. It is a sin to send a child to school without its breakfast. On the other hand, to make children happy and contented, until they are old enough to understand the uses of adversity, will not only ensure their greater love of school and its lessons, but will merit the loving reward of Him who regards all these things as done to Himself.

One further exhortation must be made in regard to School. Children attending school should not be worked. This does not mean that some kind of light

employment may not be found for them, at least when afternoon school is over. What is here referred to is a certain cruel working of children from the early morning, and again in the midday interval, which not only sends them to school tired and listless, but breaks down their strength and prematurely wears them out. Parents who do this are slave-drivers rather than parents.

Besides their children of school age, it must not be forgotten that parents are responsible also for their boys and girls who have left school, and who may be in business or at work. It is this class—young people from fourteen to seventeen or eighteen—that are the trouble and the despair of priests. They are truly as sheep without a shepherd. But why are they so wild, and why is it so difficult to keep them to their religion, or even to keep them respectable? One chief reason is, that their fathers and mothers have not, from the beginning, made them love and respect them. A boy or girl who has only had a miserable home, and a drunken, dirty, or passionate father or mother, will escape as quickly as possible from having anything further to do with them. Still, no doubt even good parents will always find much difficulty with the young people of this age. How should they behave to them? They should set them good example; they should help them and advise them about work and employment; they should encourage them to come home; they should speak out to them when they misbehave, and correct, and even,

with prudence, punish them ; they should try to make them regular at Mass on Sundays ; they should do their best to get them to the Sunday Catechism ; they should endeavour to induce them to join a confraternity, or sodality, or guild, such as may be found in most parishes. In these matters, and in keeping them from learning to drink, to swear, to gamble, to idle, and to sin by impurity, neither father nor mother may be able to do much. But they must clearly understand that they have an obligation to their children as long as they are, or ought to be, under their charge—and what they can do, that they are bound to do.

XVIII

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION SHOULD BE SPIRITUAL

Religious Instruction is the word of God—It should be imparted not merely as information, or mental education, or history—It should be looked upon with reverence, delivered with piety, and at times given before the Altar.

Our grandest and best inheritance is the purity of our Catholic Faith. In a country like this not a day passes but our Faith has to be fought for, either by word or by act, by resistance or by sacrifice. But we can do nothing which is better adapted to keep the Faith whole and undefiled than to secure for ourselves and for our children good, solid, and constant Religious Instruction. For the Faith is the Word of God. It is not mere information, or the result of study, or the effect of any human discovery. It *is* the Word of God received into the heart. Now the Word of God is not a dumb and lifeless book or writing, like the words of some wise man who died hundreds of years ago. Some of this Divine Word, no doubt, is written—and we call it the Holy Scriptures, and reverence it with all our hearts. But whether it is written or not written, it is spoken, and taught, and explained, and enforced, by the means

appointed by God Himself—the ministry of His holy Catholic Church. The Word of God was first spoken by the Holy Spirit, and spoken that all might hear. It is in this world like a mighty sound, or a blowing wind, filling the whole world, penetrating every heart, always fresh in every generation. It keeps the world from dying of error and ignorance. It speaks of that world to come which is our greatest concern, and that unseen world round about us which human speakers would utterly ignore. It comes through human lips, through men who of themselves would be nothing but fallible, and who, personally, if we except the Sovereign Pontiff in his *ex cathedra* pronouncements, *are* fallible and ignorant. But these men, these ministers of God, cannot be grossly mistaken about His Word; this He has solemnly promised. And for the rest they study and pray in order that they may rightly impart it to their brethren. They do not invent it or compose it; they find it ready to their hand; all they have to do is to distribute it, as one might dip his hand into a treasure of gold and precious stones and then deal out what he had taken. The Word of God, then, is the constant presence and communication of the Holy Spirit on the earth. And our Faith is the light of the soul which comes from that Divine Presence.

Now, the process by which the ministry of Christ impart this august word of God to the souls of the faithful is called Religious Instruction. Religious Instruction is a most serious matter, both to ministers and to

people. The Priest, to whom it is committed to teach men and to make them disciples of his Great Master, Christ, is responsible to God for this heavy charge. He is bound to preach. Nothing can excuse him if he neglects to teach his people, or if he is silent when he ought to speak. And what he must preach is the Word of God, the Divine Message, the Holy Gospel of the Redeemer Christ. He may not invent views and dogmas of his own ; he may not obscure God's Word with human fancies. He must not preach himself, but Christ. He must not preach mere science, or information, or politics, but the Christian Religion. He must speak so that his flock may understand, and not go empty away. And he must live up to the word he utters, or else he insults the great Giver of the Word, and fails to reach his hearer's soul. As for the people, there can be no more important duty than to learn, as far as they ought to learn, all that the Word of God has to teach them. For the Word is their redemption ; it is the Word of their Redeemer. To miss it, therefore, is the worst of misfortunes ; but to neglect or despise it is the most fatal of sins.

There is no Catholic in these times who does not understand how vital it is to Faith to give Religious Instruction to children. This great truth has, of late, been brought forward and discussed in a way that makes it well-nigh impossible for any one not to have heard it. Our Catholic schools are a living and grand proof of our Catholic feeling on this

matter; and pastors, year by year, take pains to show their flocks why every effort must be made to keep them up. For a child who goes to a non-Catholic school, even if he is not taught religious error, lives for at least four or five hours of every day in a non-Catholic atmosphere; and, moreover, as a child's faculties and patience are limited, the school which has him for four hours generally has him altogether.

But there is one point regarding the Religious Instruction of children which it is necessary to insist upon. It is, that Religious Instruction, in order to form in a child a truly Christian character, must be SPIRITUAL.

To explain what is here meant, it is to be observed that the teaching of Religion may be given in many different ways. First of all, Religious Instruction may be imparted merely as Information. The child is told that the Church teaches such and such doctrines, that the Sacraments are so many, that our Lord did and said such and such things during His life. We could imagine even a non-Catholic or a heathen teacher being a successful catechist if Religious Instruction were no more than this. The child is drilled just as if it were being taught geography or spelling. It has to prepare so much for the examination, and it has to be made to learn it. Many teachers, no doubt, will not teach mere information, but will impart also much instruction at the same time. They will give reasons and trace out connections. They will make a child see, for

instance, how beautifully arranged are the Ten Commandments, how the idea of the Church rests upon authority, or how the Apostles' Creed developed into the Nicene. Such teaching is much more than mere Information. It may be called real intellectual education. Then again there are other teachers who will dwell chiefly on the Historical aspect of Religious Instruction. They will give Scripture lessons as if they were treating of ancient Greece or the history of Rome ; they will go with minute care into the chronology of our Blessed Saviour's public life ; or they will insist on familiar acquaintance with the journeys of St. Paul and the dates of the Epistles. With others, it will not be History so much as tales and stories that they will offer to their class ; for Religious Instruction, in some of its branches, has all the interest and attraction of those personal and adventurous narratives in which childhood delights. As to all these methods of teaching Catechism not a word of blame or censure has to be said. Religious Instruction means information, it means mental training, it means history, and it means stories ; but no pastor of souls will admit for one moment that it means nothing more.

To understand what is wanting, we have only to recall that, as already explained, Religious Instruction is the delivery of the Word of God. Now the Word of God is intended, chiefly and before all, to save our souls. "Receive with meekness," says St. James, "the engrafted word, which is able to save

your souls" (James i. 21). Knowledge is not a bad thing in itself; but knowledge, even the knowledge of religion, is a very poor thing in comparison with loving God above all things. You have all read, in the Epistles of St. Paul, how he seems to despise what he calls "human wisdom." Look, for instance, at the second chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. He says that he does not pretend to know anything but Christ, and Him crucified; he tells them that their Faith stands not on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God; and he gives them to understand that all that is needful is to know the "mind of Christ," which the Spirit alone can teach them. In these passages St. Paul did not mean to express any contempt for human learning, except in comparison with spiritual knowledge. But it was necessary for him to speak like this in order to bring out the great truth that the best and only wise use of knowledge is to draw men nearer to Jesus Christ and to save their immortal souls. The first and principal purpose, then, of all Religious Instruction is to increase Faith, Hope, and Charity; to make the young, and the old likewise, firm believers, practical Christians, and devout servants of our Lord Jesus Christ.

One of the most serious duties, therefore, of parents and of all who have care of the young, is to teach children to look upon Religious Instruction as a *spiritual* work.

First, parents, as well as pastors and teachers,

should uniformly treat Religious Instruction with all that reverence and seriousness which we owe to the Word of God. They should speak of Catechism as of a holy work. They should send their children to it as to Divine service—for Divine service, indeed, it is. They should be most exact and particular in seeing that they attend, and attend with all that promptitude which Holy Scripture praises in the devout child of the Temple, who was taught to rise from his bed at the Lord's call, and to say, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." In how many ways does the Divine Saviour of man speak to the young heart during the moment of a devout Catechism!

Next, the Catechism itself should be made spiritual, whether it is given by the parent or the teacher. To give a child Religious Instruction is primarily the duty of the parents. It is they who are answerable to God for the child's soul. And even if the regular Catechism is left, where there is a school, to the teacher, it is the parents' duty to instruct in a less formal manner at home, whenever the occasion requires it; for example, by making the children say their prayers, by taking them to Mass, by seeing they go to Confession and Communion, by correcting their bad habits, and teaching them to offer their daily actions to Almighty God. Teachers, on their part, will not find it difficult to give a spiritual character to the Catechism. It should be begun with reverence and with prayer. The holy name of God should

be treated with the greatest honour. The sacred name of Jesus should be uttered with devotion and respect. The children should be made to feel the existence of the invisible and supernatural. A word now and then will impress upon them the value of the immortal soul, the necessity of self-denial, the hideousness of sin. The deep and abstract dogmatic teachings of revelation, the sacred mysteries of Christianity, will be used to put Christ more clearly before the heart. No prayer will be taught without recollection and outward devotion. The pages of the Old Testament will be turned to edification, and the life of Jesus will be gently impressed upon the opening intelligence—never to fade away from those fortunate hearts which are brought within its influence. It is true that the teacher has to make the children *learn*, and, therefore, is not expected to occupy them with long or formal exhortations to piety; but it is a very great evil if piety is not present all through the lesson. The feverish and fierce preparation for the religious examination which is made in some schools is simply the ruin of piety, and the degradation of God's Word to a common and distasteful school exercise.

But there is one means which, above all, is adapted to make the Catechism pious and spiritual. This is, the catechising of the children by the Priest in the Church, before the altar of God. Here, in the silence of the sanctuary, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, the little ones of the flock are

gathered by their own pastor on Our Lord's day. If it has been well managed, and if parents do their duty, they are all in good time, awaiting the entrance of the robed priest of God. Instruction by class-teachers may have gone on, in the Church or the school, for some time already ; but when the moment comes for the pastor of the flock to take his place before the altar, or in the pulpit, all sounds are hushed and all eyes are turned to the minister of God's Word. Then no longer is heard any voice but the voice of the shepherd of souls, now questioning gently, now explaining, now praising, now reproving. Then the spiritual force of holy teaching is felt. Then the truths of the Christian Creed are felt to bring Christ near. Then the Commandments are indeed the word of the Lord. Then Faith is holy and precious, to be confessed before all the world, even at the sacrifice of life. Then Jesus is in the midst, and those who are gathered together feel themselves to be listening to that most powerful and Divine Word which alone can save the world. And as the voice of the little ones is heard, meekly answering in the religious silence, one is sure that the lesson learnt is not a lesson of the lips merely, but of the heart and spirit. Then is the time for parents and for all the flock to be present ; for they not only themselves learn many things of which they are far too ignorant, but they encourage and stimulate the children by letting them see what importance they attach to the Catechism. And when at last the

Priest turns to the altar and prays, or when the Sacrament of Love is exposed and the sacred hymns rise up to heaven, all, both young and old, must feel that they are drawing down on themselves a Divine blessing which will send them forth better Christians, more resolute to resist temptation and to love God with all their heart and soul. For mere knowledge of the Catechism, necessary as knowledge is, especially in these times, is not enough to make a man or a woman a strong, God-fearing Catholic. Real religion is to be impressed upon the character by spiritual means alone; by the nearness of God, the love of Jesus, the awakening of conscience, the dread of losing one's soul, and the apprehension of the judgment. Now the Catechism is full of these things. The Catechism is their foundation and their strength; it only requires the zeal of a lover of souls to make it truly spiritual. Thus taught, the Catechism will form in each generation instructed and pious Catholics, whom neither false teaching will pervert, nor the bad example of an evil world corrupt.

XIX

ZEAL FOR SOULS

If we love God, we must be zealous for the souls of men—Love of our neighbour a test of our love of God—Especially are we bound to try to give spiritual help—The October prayers—Catholicism without zeal for souls sure to decay—Letter of Pope Leo XIII. to the English—What Union means—All should co-operate in bringing about Union: by a Catholic's own unworldly life, by being prepared to give information, and by public and private prayer.

Among the duties of believers there is one which is far too generally neglected. It is the duty of trying to make converts; the duty of imparting to others that holy faith which we are so happy as to enjoy ourselves. This responsibility no doubt affects the Clergy in a different degree from the Laity, and in a different way. But it is a very grave mistake to suppose that we are not, every one of us, bound to labour, each in his own sphere, for the conversion of the non-Catholics who surround us on every side.

The law of the love of our neighbour is one which is called by our Blessed Saviour a "New Commandment," because He has made it a marked feature of the New Covenant. The Gospel of Jesus Christ requires from men and women greater nearness to God than the ancient law; and a deeper, a more

searching, and a more tender love of one another was necessary in order to ensure, and to test, a deeper, a more exact, and a more heartfelt love of God. But the substance of the commandment was as old as the creation of man. It is one of those dictates of nature written on our consciences by the finger of the God Who made us. We have only to look and we can read it ; we have only to make the simplest of reflections and it becomes luminous to our reason. We are bound to love our neighbour because we are bound to love God. We are bound to love God, because our souls are His creation. They are made to His image, with immortal longings to satisfy, and eternity to live through, and are therefore utterly unable to hope for rest or happiness unless they attain to the final possession of Him. Now, as He has made our souls, so He has made the souls of all mankind. If *we* are bound to turn to Him, so are they. As He is jealous of us, so He is jealous of all. As He wills that we be saved, so He wills that all be saved. As He has made Himself the Father, the Friend, the Saviour, and the Shepherd of my individual soul, so has He done to every soul of all the generations of men. In this divine wish, in this most beneficent counsel, our duty is to second our Lord and Master. His zeal for the saving of souls must be the pattern for our imitation. If we love Him, we must work for Him and work with Him. No one can truly have given his heart to his Divine Lord if he is not ardent and eager to gather in for that Supreme

Master of the household the harvest which He so longs to see secure in the courts of the heavenly kingdom.

This law of the love of one another, whose springs are so deep within us, and whose streams have been so solemnly consecrated by Jesus Christ, covers the whole of this universe which man inhabits. Few men or women—we may truly say none—can avoid the influence of other men and women. We all have neighbours ; and our neighbours may help us to bliss and happiness, or they may sink us to everlasting ruin. Each of us has the responsibility of the souls which are near him. Our words and example, our acts and omissions, must influence, for good or for evil, all who cross our path. If we are not with Christ, we are against Him ; if we do not gather, we scatter. There is no escape from the law of brotherly love.

Moreover, as has been said, our love of our neighbour is a test of our love of God. Every interior act must be tried by an outward test, if we would be sure that it is genuine. Love, worship, contrition—these are acts of the heart, and there is abundant room for delusion in their exercise. To prove our love, we must keep the commandments. No sighs and tears, no bending of the knee or bowing of the head, no protestations or ejaculations, will avail before God unless we also do as He orders us. And let us observe that this proof or test is not required for Almighty God (Who can read our hearts), but for ourselves. Our human nature wants it in order to be sure that its interior emotions are genuine. Thus,

God has proclaimed that He will take our behaviour to one another as a test of our dispositions towards Himself. True Christians understand this. They are not content with devout feelings, or with prayers said smoothly and comfortably ; they put down their prayer-books and come out and find the poor man ; they visit the house of want and of sickness ; they seek out the neglected child ; they put their hands in their pockets and help the missionary ; and if they feel they have to make an effort to do these duties of charity, they recognise how easily their religion might have been a sham, unless Christ had ordered them to minister to His little ones.

From these considerations it is easy to infer that the chief commandment of brotherly charity is to try to save our neighbours' souls. Our Heavenly Father cares for souls, and (in a certain sense) for souls alone. If He can finally gather these precious souls safe into His heavenly country, what else is of any consequence ? It is true that we must feed the hungry and minister to the distressed. These are clear and stringent duties, binding upon all according to circumstances. Such material charity, indeed, is often the first thing to attend to, because you cannot do much good to the soul of a man who is starving, nor can you organise spiritual efforts in the face of misery and destitution. But in proportion as the immortal soul is more precious than the body, so is the charity which labours for the soul more urgent and more pleasing to Almighty God than that which stops short

at the wants of the body. This is an age of beneficence and of philanthropy; but we are in danger of forgetting what kind of charity is the truest beneficence and the most genuine philanthropy. Those who are outside the Church's fold naturally let alone the works of mercy spiritual; they are too ill-informed, too indifferent, or at least too uncertain in matters of religion, to help their neighbours in the way that a Christian should be helped. But for us there should be no excuse. All Catholics know that the way to salvation lies through Christ's Word and Christ's Sacraments. When we think of the thousands round about us, who, by an inscrutable judgment of God, are living without adequate Faith, without knowing how to repent of their sins, without the Blessed Sacrament, we must surely, unless we are very poor creatures indeed, be filled with serious thoughts. These non-Catholics are our neighbours; many of them are intimate with us; many are probably among our valued and dear friends. There are men and women of fine natural dispositions, religiously disposed, and not afraid of self-denial and of sacrifice. There are troops of little children, taught in most instances to know the name of Christ, only wanting further definite teaching and the sacraments to secure their final perseverance. All these souls cry out to us for help. Priests and people are answerable to God for them. The priest knows this too well; and whilst he offers prayer and sacrifice, whilst he exhorts, and spends himself, his life is saddened and darkened

by the knowledge that the fruit of all his efforts is so small. But let us take courage, my brethren in the priesthood. Whatever seed is sown must come up. No prayer or apostolic act can possibly be thrown away. Continue to sacrifice, continue to pray. Cease not to explain, with reverent and careful study, the saving word of God. Seek out the well-disposed, as occasion may offer ; let zeal teach you a divine skill in attracting the inquirer ; remain at your post unwearied, that none who venture near may ever go back empty. For God counteth all your steps, and the bread which you have thrown on the waters will come back to you. We are not bound to make converts, but we *are* bound to labour for conversions.

The laity—the members of the flock in general—are bound, on their part, to prayer, and to the contribution of labour and money, according to their means. Regular prayer for the conversion of the country is a duty on all. At the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament on the second Sunday of every month, it is the wish of the Bishops that special intentions and prayers should be offered for this holy purpose. We should also pray in particular for our immediate friends and neighbours. Without annoying them, or making religion ridiculous, we should take opportunities of explaining Catholic teaching and Catholic rites—(and for this purpose we should be well-informed and fully instructed ourselves)—we should be ready to lend books, and we should promote attendance at Church ; for the mere presence

of the Blessed Sacrament often touches the heart with irresistible grace. Finally, we should in all things lead such a Christian and edifying life as to preach Christ by our actions. The devout man preaches Christ; the sober and temperate man preaches Christ; the honest, the chaste, the Church-going, the pure of speech—these are the apostles of our Saviour. This is an apostleship which requires no laying on of hands; it is our Lord's charge laid on every soul in virtue of that soul's relationship to the Lord Himself. The united prayer of the Catholic Church, ordered by Pope Leo XIII. for each month of October, is especially intended to bring about conversions. We should take up those prayers in the spirit of faith.

The faith of a Christian heart has much to contend with in the times in which we live. With every generation the world seems to grow more deadly. Like some of our marvellous modern machines, its speed and power are terrible; its wheels go faster and faster, it fumes and flashes, it catches, crushes, and transforms, more and more effectively, and the ring and crash of its motion arrest our very senses. Faith, in such a noise and such a hurry as this, finds it difficult to make itself felt or heard. In simpler and less exacting times, Faith counted as one of the visible forces of the world. Now it seems to be overborne and drowned.

Perhaps this may explain, in some degree, why it is that it is so difficult in modern times to start or

carry out a crusade. Faith cannot make itself heard. There are plenty of believers, and a good many practical Catholics ; but, like the raindrops on the hot sands of the desert, the aspirations of Faith disappear as they touch the earth ; no stream or rivulet is formed, no lake, no sea—and the barren sands remain unchanged. There is no united Catholic effort. There are brave and loyal hearts, self-sacrificing hearts, spiritual-minded and devoted men and women. Here and there in a generation a few unite together and fight for Church or Pope, for good laws and Catholic liberty. But there has been nothing yet, in these latter generations, like a universal stirring up of the Catholic strength. If there had been, we should not now have to complain so bitterly that the Church is persecuted and the Sovereign Pontiff fettered.

But whilst we long and wait for a crusade—a crusade of such a kind as modern times demand—there is always one kind of associated effort which is within the bounds of present possibility. This is general and united prayer. Prayer requires no banners, no speeches, no meetings, no arms. Prayer can be made without braving opposition, encountering ridicule, spending money—without any of those sacrifices which men of faith might make, but which the world makes it difficult for men to make just now. Prayer not only works many wonders on behalf of the kingdom of God at large, but it is the sanctification of each one's

individual soul. And whilst prayer is sure to be answered in some direction, it has the further inestimable effect of gradually strengthening Christian faith and Christian courage, so that when a call of a different kind may come from the throne of the Fisherman, Christians will be ready to answer that call with a loyalty and unanimity worthy of their numbers and their race.

The objects and purposes of the Holy Father in calling the flock to special prayer during October are sufficiently known to all, at least in their general outlines. They include specially the deliverance of the Holy See from imprisonment, and the checking of that sacrilegious encroachment of the State upon religion and education which we have to deplore in so many Christian countries. But with us, in England and Wales, there is one most pressing intention for which it cannot be doubted that the Sovereign Pontiff would invite us to offer our prayers. It is true that we require many things, for our schools, for our poor, for our orphans, and for the religious welfare of our people in general. But it will hardly surprise you to hear that what we want more than anything else, is the conversion to the faith of Christ of those among whom we live.

With the help of God, the Catholic Church of this country is now fairly rooted in the land and based on solid foundations. There are many drawbacks which are known to all, and which call upon all of us, priests and people, to humble ourselves before the

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Prince of Pastors, Jesus Christ, Who gave His life for the flock. But we have churches, schools, and priests—we have numerous congregations and a steadily practising population. With all this, we are now in face of a danger which may be serious—of a fault which may blight the future of our holy faith. No Catholic community has ever had a long or vigorous existence which has been without zeal for the spread of the Kingdom of God. You need not be reminded how, in Apostolic times, St. Peter and St. Paul had to strive against that narrow spirit which wished to confine the glorious inheritance of Christ to the race of Israel alone, and to leave the nations of the world in their heathenism. In early Christian history, nothing is more melancholy than to consider the withering of so many noble Churches which seem to have decayed because they had lost the zealous proselytising spirit of their founders. In this island, the ancient British Church, with all its glories, became narrow, jealous and exclusive; it ceased to be the mother of Saints, and had to have new life infused into it by strangers. To speak of smaller instances—have we not seen with our own eyes many a mission in this country, founded, it may be, two or three generations ago and giving excellent promise in its beginnings, now after so many years not only no larger, but absolutely diminished in numbers, stagnant, lifeless, and threatening to disappear? Can it be that in those places the spirit of zeal has by degrees died out—that the flock, and perhaps

the pastors of the flock, have not cared for the souls of those without—that they have assembled in their little chapel and heard their Mass and said their prayers for decade after decade, and not wanted, not encouraged, not prayed for, those around them, for whom Christ died as well as for themselves ?

The spirit of indifference to the saving of souls is a real danger, both to countries, to districts, and to individual missions. It brings with it three great evils—uncharitableness, indifference, and isolation ; uncharitableness to our neighbours, indifference to Christ, to His interests, to His Church, and to His Sacraments; and isolation from centres of life and animation, and especially from that great centre of all—the Roman See, with its traditions and its ever-renewed vitality. For the Roman Church has always been the great missionary Church; and no local Church, no diocese, no district, could possibly lose its missionary spirit without also to a greater or less degree withdrawing itself from the influences which perennially emanate from the See of St. Peter.

To be zealous for souls, therefore, is to live; to be indifferent to souls is to decay and die. Here is our lesson. There are round about us—round about every Catholic altar in town and country—thousands of non-Catholics. They may be, in some way, strangers ; they may be, to some of us, alien in blood and race ; they may be unsympathetic, or even in some respects contemptuous and hostile. For the most part, it is certain that if they ignore or reject

our holy religion, it is because of the prejudice in which they have been brought up and in which they necessarily live; it is certain that many are willing to listen, and that a large number, deprived as they are of our Catholic Sacraments and of the Holy Eucharist, venerate Our Lord, respect the Scriptures, and keep with greater or less fidelity the Commandments of the Decalogue. But whoever, or whatever, their souls may be, it is our duty, as followers of Christ, to desire, to pray for, and to work for their conversion to the Catholic Faith. We cannot love Christ unless we do our best for those for whom He is longing. It is mere superstition to be proud of your faith, if you do not want to bring all men to share it. It is an insult to Jesus Christ to boast of Catholic forefathers if you do not try to make other people Catholics as well. Oh that we could stir up within us that spirit of zeal which sent the great English and Irish missionaries to distant and barbarous countries, to bring the inheritance of Jesus Christ to men with whom they had no ties and no sympathies, except that they had immortal souls, and to shed their blood, in imitation of their Master, for those who lay in darkness and in the shades of death!

There are many ways in which the flock can join with the priest, on whom most of the labour falls, in procuring conversions. Good example (—nothing hinders conversions like drunkenness, bad language, and the breaking of God's commandments); the bringing our influence to bear on friends or connec-

tions who are non-Catholics; the spreading of Catholic books, pamphlets, and leaflets; and the contributing according to our means to the Diocesan Fund and other funds for the spread of the faith. But at this moment it is only necessary to allude to one—and that is, to the prayers of the month of October. These devotions, prescribed by the late Holy Father, begin on the evening of the last day of September, and end on November 2nd, the commemoration of All Souls. Five mysteries of the Rosary are to be said each day, together with the Litany of Our Lady, and the Prayer to St. Joseph. If said in the morning, these prayers must be said during the Holy Sacrifice; if in the evening, during Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. To attend Church in order to join in these devotions will doubtless entail some degree of sacrifice and self-denial. This is the kind of prayer which pierces the heavens; self-denying, united, earnest prayer, made in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Let us offer it up for the Holy Father's intentions, and especially for the conversion of the souls around us. How happy shall we be if we contribute to bring about a movement which shall lead many well-meaning and earnest non-Catholics into the Church—a movement which, when we consider the Holy Father's two recent Letters, that "To the people of England," and that "On the Unity of the Church," and the decision as to the non-validity of Anglican Orders, now just published, is far from improbable.

The obligation which binds all the Catholics of this country to do their best in order to bring about the union of their fellow-citizens with the Catholic Church has been set before us in eloquent terms by Pope Leo XIII. in the remarkable letter "to the English people."[1] That letter, so full of fatherly solicitude, it is true, was, in form, addressed rather to Protestants than to ourselves. It pointed out to our non-Catholic fellow-countrymen what they are losing and forfeiting by remaining outside of Catholic belief, Catholic practice, and Catholic Sacraments. It impressed upon them the fact, which in this country has been so unhappily ignored, that the Church of Christ, as she has a heavenly head in Christ Himself, so she has an earthly head in the Roman Pontiff, who is Christ's Vicar. It made them feel that it was for them to come to the Church, rather than for the Church to come to them. The Church has never failed, and she never will fail. She has always been visible, always able to speak her behests, always unerring, always holy, always Apostolical. It is not the office of her Pastors to be proud, unapproachable, or supercilious. Like their divine Master, Whom they humbly and at a great distance follow, they must seek out the wanderer and entreat the sinner. But the Church herself can never meet error half-way. She may modify her discipline, and adapt her ritual to the circumstances of time and place. But her Creeds she cannot alter; the decisions of her Coun-

[1] *Amantissimæ voluntatis*, April 14, 1895.

cils she can never repudiate; the definitions of her Supreme Head she can neither reject nor suffer to pass into oblivion. If she could, she would no longer be the "pillar and the ground of truth" (1 Timothy iii. 15), but rather a wave-tossed bark, at the mercy of every breeze that blows.

It would be no kindness to our non-Catholic brethren to hold out to them the hope that truths like Transubstantiation or the Immaculate Conception, or the infallibility of the Sovereign Pontiff, or the full inspiration of Sacred Scripture, can ever be given up, or cut down, or explained away. These dogmas, in fact, are not excrescences—not fanciful additions to Christian belief, elaborated by the piety or enthusiasm of this or that generation. They are as much a part of the original revelation as the leaf that comes out in the spring is a part of the tree which in winter had only bare branches. To go back on them, now that the consciousness of men has explicitly lifted them to the surface of thought, would be to destroy and nullify those primary Christian truths which even non-Catholics acknowledge to be part of Christ's revelation. To the Catholic Church, therefore, unity and reconciliation can only mean the full acceptance of her dogmatic teaching and of her everyday and continuous right to teach and to be obeyed. If these conditions seem hard or intolerant, we can only reply that if there is any ascertainable divine revelation at all it must exclude all toleration of any contrary doctrine. Unless we desire to reduce

Christianity to the vague and impalpable conditions of the agnostic and the rationalist, a line must be drawn somewhere ; and wherever you draw it, those who are left on the outside will be apt to raise the cry of intolerance. But the Catholic view—that is, the Catholic faith—is, that Christ has revealed many things, and that the Church, to which He has said, "I am with you to the consummation of the world," has defined and decided many things ; and if to act on such a view be intolerance, then we must charge with intolerance even Christ Himself.

It is consoling to know that the Letter of the Holy Father to the English people, as well as that on the Unity of the Church,[1] has been received, on the whole, with a courtesy and good feeling such as its kindly and fatherly tone deserved. It was hardly to be expected that the people of this country should at once respond in the way that the Pope would ardently desire—that is, by recognising the Catholic Church, and praying for admittance into her fold. A desire for union can only spring from a right understanding of what union means. As long as the vast majority of our fellow-countrymen cling to the right of private judgment, and hold that Christ left His religion to be argued and fought over by the crowd, they will neither see any advantage in union, nor believe that union is possible. It is true there is a considerable number of Anglicans who have some acquaintance with the idea of a teaching Church.

[1] *Satis cognitum*, June 29, 1896.

Of these, it may be expected that prayer and sincerity will lead some to Catholicism. But it must be sorrowfully admitted that among those who are the loudest in proclaiming their belief in what they call "Church Principles" we meet with the strongest instances of the essential spirit of Protestantism; for we find too many assuming the right to judge and define the constitution, the prerogatives and the practice of the Church of Christ by the light of their own study, their own reasonings, and their own fancies.

On our own part the Holy Father's appeal may well remind us of our duty. If we love our Lord and Saviour we must desire with anxious longing to see this country return to its ancient faith. To whatever land we may belong by birth or race, we are all one in Christ; all destined to immortality, all partakers in the blood of Calvary, and all, therefore, intended by our blessed Redeemer to profess His faith, and to make use of His Sacraments. To save souls is to imitate Christ; to bring souls to Him is the sweetest offering we can make Him. To draw men to real and practical belief in the Incarnation, in the Eucharistic Presence, in the beneficent gifts of the Priesthood, and in the intercessory office of Christ's Mother and His Saints, is worth all our efforts and all our sacrifices. What a field is there lying around us, stretching far on every side, for the zeal and the missionary spirit of Catholics! Many of our priests have but small congregations and but

few who recognise their ministry. But they are all of them debtors, as St. Paul said, to a far wider flock; they are, in a certain degree, responsible in their respective districts, for all those crowds who frequent church and chapel—for the men and women in the street—for the reckless and indifferent, the honest and the God-fearing, the prejudiced, the doubters, the inquirers, and the lookers-on, who constitute the dense and varied population of the land we live in. And if the clergy are primarily answerable for the souls around them, every Catholic family and every Catholic individual must also share in that charge. Whatever can be done by zeal and charity, enlightened and guided by discretion, should be anxiously done by each of us, in the great cause of the conversion of souls.

Among the means which might, and should, be employed in the discharge of this great duty—leaving out of the question the direct missionary work of the clergy—may be first mentioned the public and careful profession of the holy Catholic Faith. It is often said, and it is an undeniable fact, that the disedifying life of so many Catholics is one of the chief reasons why we gather so few souls into the Church. The prevalence of indifference, worldliness, drunkenness, and dishonesty cannot but repel non-Catholics, even those who are no better themselves. The truth is, that the greatest triumph of the devil in a Protestant country is to corrupt and degrade the Catholics. To neglect prayer, to live without Mass

or confession and communion, and to let oneself be carried along with the general stream, giving up all the week to worldly work, drifting into the habit of degraded amusements, feeding what intelligence one has on the scraps of the newspapers—this is to desert from the army of Christ. It is to throw away the grandest supernatural motives and the most precious supernatural helps, and to find oneself without even those natural supports of respectability and human respect which so often prevent the outward lives of others from being degraded. This is what a Catholic people have to fear in a non-Catholic country. Our first duty to those round about us, whom we desire to draw to the sanctuary of the Lord and to the holy Table of the New Covenant, is to keep ourselves untouched by the unbelief, the religious indifference, and the denial of the supernatural, which grow so rank and so thick over all the soil of a non-Catholic country. It is only the practical Catholic who can hope to take his share in the journeyings of the Good Shepherd after the straying sheep. It is only the Catholic who knows what his Church is and what she can give him, who will do any good in enlightening and attracting his Protestant friends. It is only the Catholic who keeps the commandments who will recommend our holy religion to a questioning and a scoffing world.

Intimately bound up with the duty of edification is that of being prepared to instruct others. With the

clergy the office of instruction is a pressing and a constant charge. With all classes, in proportion to opportunity and capability, it is a work which, especially in these days, is of the utmost utility in promoting conversion. The friend who knows how to explain to a friend some point of Catholic doctrine—the servant who can give a clear answer to an employer—the young man or young woman who shows careful teaching in the Catechism—it cannot be estimated how much good such Catholics as these can effect. There are many amongst us who can put into a neighbour's hand a book or a leaflet, that will convey more than can be said by word of mouth. Printed matter of this kind is now abundant. One shilling, one sixpence, or one penny will purchase history, explanation, lives of the Saints, and interesting narrative—such as we find in the publications of the Catholic Truth Society—and as everybody in these days reads, and wants to read, it is easy to see how much might in this way be done to dissipate the prejudices or dispel the ignorance of Protestants in regard to the doctrines of the faith.

Neither must prayer and intercession ever cease, in public and in private. Every day in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass our Lord Jesus Christ Himself offers to the Fathers the infinite merits of His expiation and intercession. One Mass would suffice to obtain the grace of conversion for all the non-Catholics, and all the Jews and heathens of the whole world. Why do so many Masses fail to win

them? Because our Lord is in the hands of His servants. Miracles He works sometimes. But in the ordinary course of His grace, He does not produce outward and visible effects except with the co-operation of His priests and His people. The conversion of the country is, therefore, in our own hands. All must be done by the Grace of God. But to open the flood-gates of Heaven, and to let loose the streams of that mighty Grace, is given to the prayers of men. Therefore, never should we assist at Mass without praying for the conversion of non-Catholics. As often as we can attend at this great Act of the New Law we should be anxious to do so, were it only to unite with our Lord and Saviour in obtaining grace for those who are outside of the true fold. A special Mass of Our Lady is said, with the Litany, in every Church of this Diocese on the first Saturday of each quarter, to promote the spread of our Holy Faith. At Benediction, on the second Sunday of every month, the priest at the altar prays for the same intention. There are confraternities and associations, moreover, whose members unite in petition and in sacrifice in order to draw down God's powerful grace on those who know not the faith. Let us not be behind hand. Let us resolve to do something for the interests of Jesus Christ. Nay, let us promise, in the love and fervour of our hearts, and in the gratitude we owe Him for His holy coming and His earthly ministry, that no day shall ever pass without our lifting up a prayer, offering up a cross, or giving an

alms, for the cause which He has so much at heart—the cause of the lost sheep, the cause of the wanderer, the cause of those multitudes of our friends, neighbours, and fellow-citizens whom He longs to gather to His fold.

XX

THE OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY

All our days belong to God—The Jewish Sabbath and the reasons for it—The Christian Sunday ; obligation of hearing Mass ; the Word of God ; vespers, Rosary, Benediction ; the Sunday School, or Catechism—The importance of sanctifying the Sunday.

All our days belong to the God Who made us. In a certain sense, every hour of our life should be dedicated to the honour and service of that Heavenly Father Who created us for Himself alone, and Who alone can make us happy. But, by His will and His divine revelation, a certain portion of our time is more specially dedicated to His worship. When the ancient law was given, the seventh of each seven days was ordered to be consecrated to the Lord. This was the Sabbath—a word which signifies "rest," or "repose." For on the seventh day God "rested" from His work of creation ; and in memory of that Divine repose, the children of Israel were directed to lay aside all labour and all worldly occupation, and to keep the day holy to the Lord. When the Jewish dispensation passed away, the letter of this command was changed ; but the spirit remained. Our Blessed Saviour rose from the dead on the first day of the week. The new law,

with all its grace and all its truth, was the fruit of Christ's resurrection; for He "rose again for our justification" (Romans iv. 25). Therefore, the sacred and holy day of the new law was to be the day of the Resurrection—the first day of the week, and not the seventh—no longer the Jewish Sabbath, but the Christian Sunday.

Most of you are aware that, under the law of Moses, the Sabbath was ordered to be observed with the utmost strictness. No one was to work; no one was to buy or sell; even the manna could not be gathered on the Sabbath day. The man whom they found in the wilderness collecting wood on the Sabbath was put to death—as a just punishment for contemptuous disobedience to a law given by God Himself. It was against the sanctification of the Sabbath that the proud and cruel Antiochus directed his persecution; and the impious Nicanor was justly defeated and slain for wishing to engage in battle on the holy day of the Lord. There was a good and wise reason for this ceremonial strictness. "I gave them My Sabbaths," said the Lord by the prophet Ezechiel, "that they might be a sign between Me and them, and that they might know that I am Jehova their sanctifier" (Ezechiel xx. 12). The heathen never kept a Sabbath. The heathen lived for the world which his senses could enjoy—for pleasure, for beauty, and for possession. He knew no rest, he desired no repose, because every day and hour taken from the pursuit of earthly things was time thrown away and opportunity lost.

But the people of God were taught to live for God and for the spirit. Once every seven days they left the plough in the furrow, the sickle in the standing corn, the grapes in their heaps on the floor, and entering into their houses, into their synagogues, turned their hearts to the Lord Who had promised them the blessings of the earth and the heavens if they kept and sanctified His Sabbaths.

The Christian Sunday has succeeded to the Jewish Sabbath. It is true that many of the ceremonial features of its observance are now done away with. We are no longer bound by the rules of Leviticus, but by the ordinances of the Holy Catholic Church. But the essential character of the Sunday is the same as that of the Sabbath. The Sunday, like the Sabbath, depends for its obligation on that commandment, the third of the Decalogue, which in its essence is eternal and unchangeable. "Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day" (Exodus xx. 8) is, in its chief and primary sense, the expression of that mandate of the natural law which binds man to the regular, constant, and solemn worship of the God Who made him. The Church has defined and fixed this essential duty by appointing for its exercise the Sundays of the year, and certain other festivals. So that in the ordinance of the Christian Sunday three grand laws concur—the Divine natural law written by the finger of God upon our hearts, the Divine revealed law as given in the Ten Commandments, and the positive law given by our holy mother the Church, which may also be called

Divine, because her authority is from the same God of nature and of revelation.

It is, therefore, the serious duty of us all, both pastors and people, to promote in every way, according to our abilities and our position, the observance of the Divine command of the sanctification of the Sunday. In this country there is little or no excuse for our forgetting it. Externally the Sunday is kept with a strictness and reverence for which we may thank Almighty God. But it is unnecessary to tell you, the children of the Catholic Church, that in order to keep the Sunday holy you must do more than cease from work. The Sunday, though in one sense a day of rest, should be fully occupied with a sort of work which is both important and exacting. It is the special day of religion, devotion, and charity. To attend God's house, to assist at the holy sacrifice of the Mass, to approach the Sacraments, to hear the Word of God, to visit the sick and instruct the little ones—this is some of the work which makes the Sunday holy.

To hear Mass on Sunday is a strict obligation. To fail in hearing Mass on a Sunday (unless we are really and lawfully prevented) is to commit a grievous sin. How sad it is to know, that in many of our town missions there are hundreds who are so dead to the sense of religion, that on Sunday mornings they will not take the trouble to enter the Church which is close to their very doors! On the other hand, it is edifying and consoling to see good and faithful

Catholics submitting to every inconvenience, and sometimes walking many miles, in order not to miss that Divine Sacrifice of their Saviour which is the chief sanctification of the Sunday. "For this remember them, O Lord! and spare them according to the multitude of Thy mercies" (2 Esdras iii. 22). No doubt, some Catholics are lawfully excused by reason of sickness, distance, or young children. But too many lose Mass because they are lazy in the morning, because they do not arrange their necessary housework properly, because they have not "dressed themselves," or because they think their clothes not good enough. These excuses will not serve in God's sight. And even if a man or woman is lawfully excused from going to Mass on this Sunday or that, it must be borne in mind that no one is excused from going to Mass altogether; Mass must be heard sometimes, for unless Mass be heard sometimes, it is morally impossible to save one's soul—and no one is excused from saving one's soul.

To sanctify the Sunday by hearing the Word of God is also a real and pressing obligation. It is true that one does not commit a grievous sin by losing a sermon, as one does by losing Mass. But it is none the less certain that, for the great majority of our people, it is sinful to stay away from sermons or instructions, and that it may easily become grievously sinful. The reason is, that the hearing of the Word of God, speaking generally, is necessary for salvation. Without religious instruction, the flock can neither

know their religion, resist temptation, frequent the Sacraments worthily, nor discharge the duties of their state of life. Therefore, without religious instruction they cannot be saved. But it is only on the Sunday that the greater part of the flock have any chance of hearing instruction. Therefore, it follows that to neglect the Sunday sermons or catechism may easily amount to a grievous sin. Pastors know this well, and therefore they are anxious not only to gather their people together for the sermons at the principal Mass and at the evening service, but they also most laudably endeavour to give brief exhortations also at the early Masses, and to induce as many as possible to attend at the catechism which is given in the Church to the children. And how can the Lord's holy day be better spent than in sitting at His feet, in listening to those blessed truths of which we think so little during the week, and in trying to kindle in our hearts that Divine fire which Jesus came to bring upon the earth.

The devout Catholic will also strive to sanctify the Sunday by assisting at the Rosary, at Vespers, and at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. It is, as we have informed you on a former occasion, the wish of the Holy Father that the Rosary should be said every day in Cathedral Churches, and every Sunday in all churches. This direction, and the order for the daily solemn recitation during October, have given a very remarkable position to the devotion of the Rosary; and both pastors and people

could not do better than pay the greatest attention, not merely to its regular recitation, but to the attaining such a thorough and practical knowledge and appreciation of its form and its matter as shall make its recitation more and more intelligent, interesting, and profitable.

The Sunday is, in this country, a very hard day for the priest. Anything, therefore, that the flock can do to help him should be willingly done. Among other things the flock might assist, to some extent, in the catechizing of the children. We hear much in these days of the "Sunday School"; and it is to the credit of the various non-Catholic denominations that they, as a rule, exert themselves strenuously to interest both the children and their elders in Sunday religious teaching. The Catholic child is best taught, on Sundays, not in the school but in the Church, and "Catechism" is a name which is more in accordance with our traditions than "Sunday School." But by whatever name it is called, it is a most necessary part of the organisation of a mission. Sunday catechism cannot be carried on profitably without the priest; but there should be willing helpers at hand. Not only should the regular school staff be happy and proud to sanctify the Lord's day by bringing Him nearer to the intelligence and the hearts of His little ones, but all those whom the pastor may ask, or whose services he may accept, should be honoured by taking a share in the work. It is a work which requires instruction, self-denial, obedience, and per-

severance; but for that very reason it is a work which gloriously sanctifies the day which our Lord calls His own. And those who do not actively assist in teaching or marshalling the children can always do much good by being present at the catechism; for they both encourage the children by showing their appreciation of the importance of attendance at catechism, and they sanctify themselves by the words of instruction and exhortation which they hear. As for those of the faithful who cannot go to Church, or who can only go once, or who, having attended Church, have still leisure and opportunity at home, private devotion or holy reading should assist in filling up those hours which they are expected to give to God.

Let us observe well, dear children in Jesus Christ, that the third commandment is introduced by the solemn word "Remember!"—"Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day." For the importance of sanctifying the Sunday can hardly be overrated. It is especially in these modern days of feverish activity and unceasing work that we need to have one day in the week for prayer, and reflection, and spiritual occupation. How easy it is to forget God and our souls and the eternity which is to come! And how perverse and guilty are those who waste or misspend the Sunday! The Sunday is, no doubt, the day of rest for the working man. His labour is hard during the week, and there is no blame to him if he enjoys his Sunday morning's freedom and his Sunday after-

noon's recreation. But there is room for rest and room for duty; and it is only the slothful and negligent Catholic who will maintain that his Mass and his going to Church prevent him from getting the benefit of his Sunday. Unfortunately, there is very often not merely idleness, but also sin and degradation. Oh! my brethren! If God punished by death the disobedient Sabbath-breaker in the days of the ancient law, what does *he* deserve who desecrates the Sunday of the new law by drunkenness, evil language, and immodesty! In some of our congregations, within the very sound of the Church bell, almost within sight of the lamp of the sanctuary, there are houses where Sunday drinking, week after week, is damning the souls of men and women, corrupting boys and girls, and infecting the very infants with a leprosy of degradation which they will carry to their graves. No wonder that priests are down-hearted, and that religion makes little progress, when we have such scandals round the very walls of our churches. Let us all pray that these shameful things may cease; and let us especially—all we who have the honour of God at heart—gather zealously round His altars on the Sundays to make some reparation to His outraged majesty, and to deserve His mercy and compassion. For God blesses those who keep the Sunday; as in the Jewish times, so now, the Sunday is a sign and a covenant between Him and His people; let them obey His Word, and keep His day holy, and He will be their God and they shall be His people.

XXI

KINDNESS IN SPEECH

All souls dear to God, and should therefore be dear to us—The love of our neighbour must be a true, interior affection and concern for them, for God's sake—To injure or wound our neighbour by words is to wound (as far as in us lies) our Heavenly Father Himself—Calumny a manifestation of that widespread pagan selfishness which it is the office of the Gospel to repress—Wrong to mention without justification even true stories against our neighbour.

Among the causes which seem to hinder the blessing of God from resting upon us in our endeavours to spread our holy Faith, it is certain that not the least important is the neglect of the virtue of Charity in our intercourse with one another. What is here meant is especially Charity in speech. Kindness in act is not wanting. The poor are often in our thoughts, and the children of the poor are not altogether neglected. It is true that in regard to the spiritual needs of the poor—that is, in regard to orphanages, industrial schools and homes which are intended to save the faith of Catholic children—less interest is taken and fewer sacrifices are made than the pastors of souls could wish. But there is amongst us a much worse sin than stinginess and love of money. It is the universal prevalence of

uncharitable speech. It is this which prevents the rains from falling and which makes the heavens as of brass over our heads. It is this which strikes with barrenness our prayers and our sacrifices, the labours of the laity and the very sermons and masses of the priesthood itself.

If there is any rule of God's dealings with us which is absolutely certain and invariable, it is the rule that He treats us as we treat our fellow-creatures. We must remember that every man and woman in the world is as dear to God as we are ourselves. Each of their immortal souls is created by the special and direct act of His omnipotence. Each soul is intended for the bliss of the Beatific Vision. It was to seek and save each soul in particular that He came down from heaven and shed His most sacred Blood upon the Cross. The Holy Spirit Who now fills the whole earth loves all, visits all, and is jealous for all. It is but too true that from innumerable souls He is shut out by wilful sin. But no man is lost till he is judged. If the souls of the just and the innocent are the temples of the Holy Spirit, yet even the sinner is the object of His longings, His watchings, and His providence.

It follows from this that every human soul is the concern of each of us. For he who loves God will try to promote the designs of God and to forward the purposes of God. Therefore our neighbour is really in the place of God to each of us. And this is what our Blessed Saviour so constantly teaches.

Therefore to try to save souls, to rescue souls from temptation and danger, to bring souls to grace, to faith, to sacraments, is a duty which presses upon us, simply because we can only save our own souls by loving God above all things ; and the love of God above all things without the love of one's neighbour is a mere pretence and mockery.

But let it be observed that it is not enough to help and assist other men and women, by work and by word. God's most holy command—a command that rests, as we have said, on the grand and solemn truths of creation and redemption—is not a command which is fulfilled by trying to save our neighbour's soul, or to feed and warm his body. It is a command which, like every one of Almighty God's precepts, requires to be taken into our own hearts and bosoms. There are those who help the poor, and yet have no love for the poor. There are those who will send their subscriptions for them, but cannot bear to come near them. Some of us have generosity but no personal patience. Too many of us try to compound with our conscience by doing something for the destitute and the ignorant, whilst scarcely taking the trouble to conceal our disgust with everything in the shape of poverty, misery, sickness and ignorance. In the phrase of Holy Scripture, we gather our skirts about us and pass by. And even if we are far removed from a spirit like this, yet it is possible that we may never be penetrated with that divine tenderness and compassion for our brethren

whom God has made which was the spirit of Christ Jesus. For there is no such thing as genuine virtue unless our very mind and heart are filled with it and transformed by it. The love of our neighbour, though it is God's command, and our neighbour's advantage, is more than anything our own personal sanctification. We are intended to love our neighbour, because it is for us a good thing to love him. To sympathise with other men is to draw ourselves out from our selfishness. It is to shake off that worship of self, that concentration on self, which is more deadly than rapine or riot. It is to break up the hard surface of our fallen and spoiled nature, and to set free those softer qualities of mercy and tenderness, of compassion and solicitude, which are the best preparation for the love of God above all things. It is to make sure that when we say we love God we are honest and sincere; for there are many subtle sentiments in a man's heart which can masquerade as the love of God, when all the time they are only self in disguise; but a man can hardly make a mistake as to whether or not he loves his neighbour.

Thus, as the waters of the ocean by their ceaseless motion and commingling are kept for ever fresh and pure, so the hearts of men, one in race, one in family, one in destiny, are meant to live each in every other heart, that all the world may be healthful and sound, and as happy as a transitory world may be.

All men, then, are bound to love one another

with a true and interior affection. This leads us to our present subject—the uncharitableness of unkind words. For it is precisely because we have no real love of one another that we are so reckless in what we say about those around us. No man speaks unfeelingly about those who are dear to him. Think how sensitive we are to unkind attacks or observations on the members of our own family; how we resent a sneer or an accusation that is directed against wife or child, father or mother, brother or sister. Were all God's children truly our brothers and sisters in affection, we should shrink from wounding their feelings or their reputation by our own unconsidered words. If we could put ourselves in the place of our Heavenly Father, we should dread to say a word against those who are so dear to him. For it is He who is jealous for all the souls He has created. It is He whom we touch when we aim at men and women. To Him they are dear; they lie close to His heart; their honour is His, their injury is His concern. And it is no wonder if God withholds His grace from those who think so little of His glory and His interests.

Every Catholic is taught in his childhood that to blacken a neighbour's character is called Detraction; and that Detraction, if it is a lie as well, is called by the ugly name of Calumny. Now both simple Detraction, and the fouler species of Detraction which we call Calumny, are in themselves deadly sins. That is, it is only when circumstances reduce the

injury done to small and insignificant proportions that the detractor escapes the guilt of damnation. For if theft is a mortal sin, Detraction is as bad, or worse. To steal a man's money is not so bad as to stab his honour or his character. "Better is a good name," says the Book of Proverbs, "than great riches" (Proverbs xxii. 1). Every man has a right to his reputation. He who spreads lies or makes known discreditable things is both unjust and uncharitable; he takes away what is another's, and he injures the brother whom he is bound to love.

It would be a happy thing if the black vice of Calumny were less common than it is. But it cannot be denied that there are men, and women too, so dead to the thought of their Creator and their Judge as to deliberately invent abominable stories about other people. Nay, there are some who will go into a court of justice and swear to such stories, thus adding Perjury to their guilt. These crying sins of calumny and perjury, which strike at the foundations of all social intercourse, and which tend to make every man afraid of his neighbour, are the darker manifestations of an evil spirit which lurks in the heart of even the best of us; a spirit which finds a malignant joy in the troubles and ill luck of other people. It is a spirit which may be fought against and may be overcome, by the grace of God, and the sacraments and the imitation of Jesus Christ. But every man must reckon with it; and the heart in which it is allowed to grow and strengthen itself, in company with other

evil passions of fallen nature, is a heart in which the love of God cannot find a foothold. Can we say, from our knowledge of ourselves and of the atmosphere in which we live, that even Christians seriously strive to keep down this spirit of malevolence? The phrases of modern life and intercourse are studiously decorous, and men are accustomed to show much cordiality in public. But can any one doubt that there is in the hearts of the people amongst whom we live a widespread pagan selfishness which may seem to sleep, but is ever ready to wake up. If not, why is there that recklessness in repeating discreditable stories—that eagerness to retail damaging information —that pleasure in pulling to pieces a neighbour's character behind his back? In many cases, as much harm is done by spreading hearsay stories as by the downright invention of lies—and the breach of charity is often as grievous. Yet this is a matter to which even good people give too little consideration. Nothing will enable us to amend in this except the thought that the men and women we treat with such cold and callous unkindness are those of whom Christ has said, As long as you did it to one of these little ones, you did it to Me!

It must never be forgotten that it is forbidden by the law of God to mention, without necessity or justification, even *true* stories against our neighbour. Doubtless there are cases in which either lawful authority may compel us, or self-protection may allow us, to speak evil of others, provided that what

we say is true. Otherwise, to make known even real discreditable facts and actual occurrences is a sin not only against charity, but against justice, and (unless the damage done is really slight) it is a grievous and deadly sin. Let those who are careless in their talk look anxiously into this. Is it not too true that most of us consider our neighbours' faults and misfortunes common property? Does not that evil spirit, which was spoken of just now, seize with delight on an uncharitable story and start it on its travels with the keenest relish? Is not our kindliness towards our fellow-creatures so very weak that even for the pleasure of telling a piece of news we wreck his reputation? The detractor is ready with excuses. He will tell you that he cannot bear to see wrong things going on, and that he speaks because he wants them put right. But, if this be so, why does he not speak in the right quarter? To denounce a man before a miscellaneous company—at table, during moments of idle recreation, at a street corner, at the door, at chance meetings, to any one we meet—how can this correct him or benefit the world at large? People do this—but let them understand that they do it, not from righteous zeal, but from the itch of malignant gossip. They will tell you that their gossip does no harm. Let us admit that the guilt of the sin of detraction depends very considerably on the harm that is done. But it must be always carefully borne in mind that, in sins of this kind, the harm that is done is not measured solely by money values, but by repu-

tation. To take a man's bread out of his mouth by telling tales against him would be very hard ; but it would also be very bad and very sinful, if all the harm the stories did was to make his friends think him a scoundrel or a fool. And there are professions and states of life where a man's efficiency depends completely on his reputation. Yet even good people will be found to be in the habit of passing on stories, almost invariably exaggerated and founded on loose gossip, about priests, and about men whose employments are confidential and delicate, for which, if there be any truth in God's word, they will have to answer in the judgment.

It need not be insisted that all unkind speaking comes from deliberate malignity. The malignity does lurk and crawl in the dark recesses of our nature, ready to bite and kill ; but many men and women do keep it down. What these have to fear is idle gossip and curiosity. Idle talk may be malignant even when it does not intend to be malignant. If a man, merely to amuse himself, were to use firearms in a frequented street, he would be guilty of murder. So if we, in our idle talk, injure the good name and fame of others, we are guilty of malevolent unkindness. It is vain to say we do not intend any harm. All men in possession of their senses and their reason are bound to know that such talk cannot go on without doing damage. It is probably women who have most to answer for in this particular. They have more leisure, and their occupations more easily afford

opportunities for idle talk. It is not too much to say that half of what is said at times like this is said simply for the sake of saying something. Silence seems oppressive or unsocial, and people study to think of something to say. To discuss persons is more amusing than to discuss things, and so they fall to "backbiting." Backbiting is an expressive English word which is applied to the process of talking over other people's faults behind their backs. It is an occupation which may vary indefinitely in its degrees of guilt and malignity, but it is always mean, foolish, and uncharitable. It corrupts speakers and listeners like leprosy, spoiling their best work and taking the life out of their very virtues. It encourages the demon of uncharitableness to come up to the surface. It wastes the time that was given us to work out our salvation ; and it dishonours God our Father, ignoring that men and women are His most cherished treasures, and not the objects for heartless frivolity to aim its shafts at. Moreover, the harm which comes from gossip is incalculable. Every one knows what an evil reputation the word "tale-bearing" justly has. The repeating of tales with the insinuations, comments, and suggestions which usually give force and point to them, are among the most fruitful sources of disturbance, suspicion, separation, and misery, in this unhappy world of ours. The tales may not mean much ; the imputations may be insignificant and even ridiculous ; but when temper and feeling are in question, a very small rift may let in

the waters of a deluge. Husbands and wives are set against one another, employers and employed fall into misunderstanding, families are divided, and congregations are set quarrelling; and in hundreds of cases one can trace it all to idle and irresponsible talk. Well may the Wise Man say, "The whisperer and the double-tongued is accursed; for he hath troubled many that were at peace" (Ecclesiasticus xxviii. 15).

There is one remedy, and a sure and lasting remedy, for all the sins of unkind speech; and that is: to learn to reverence every soul that God hath made. The men and women who are in the world like ourselves are some of them close at hand, whilst others are at a distance from us. We are allowed, nay, we are bound, to love with special love our parents and children, our partners in life, our fellow-countrymen, our fellow-townsmen. But there is no one, be he hidden away in the alleys and dens of our large towns, or be he divided from us by oceans and continents, who is not our concern; because all are God's concern. In the narrow circle in which we live, where we come face to face with the weakness, the folly, and the sins of men, we shall always be tempted to follow the impulse of our fallen nature—to judge, to condemn, or at least to despise and to pass by. We may not do these things. What would my lot be if Jesus had judged *me?* The impulse which led our Lord and Saviour to Bethlehem and to the Cross, was the immense and burning love

of His Sacred Heart for every soul which He had created. Because He loved, therefore He gave His life. It is useless for us to give even our lives for other men, unless we strive to love them. When that love has come to shape and colour our speech, then we may hope that it has taken hold of our heart. And when true and genuine love of others for Christ's sake has seized upon our heart, then we may hope that God will fulfil His promises, and that He will bless our prayers, bless our sacrifices, and bless our work. For even as we do to others so has He promised to do to us.

XXII

EVIL WORDS

The gift of Speech is the instrument of the rational nature of man ; to abuse it is to abuse the very soul that God has given us—Prevalence of evil speaking—Swearing ; the use of the holy Name of God in imprecations and without necessity ; blasphemy ; cursing ; filthy speech ; words that injure, hurt, and provoke our neighbours.

The gift of speech is, on the whole, the most powerful instrument of good and of evil that is to be found among all the endowments of human nature. By speech we teach, we persuade, and we attract ; by speech we give pleasure, on the one hand, and excite fear and disgust on the other ; by speech we build up the Kingdom of God, or we destroy it, perverting our fellow-men, and leading them to impiety and perdition. Neither is there anything which seems so truly to reveal the very soul of a man as speech ; because, even when his words are lies and his tones and looks are assumed in order to deceive, yet speech is always felt to be thought made visible, and the tongue cannot utter what the spiritual soul has not already formulated in the brain. Speech, therefore, is the intellectual weapon of an intellectual nature. If we are made to the image and likeness of God—as we are—then our speech is naturally the outward

effect and manifestation of that august likeness—just as the piercing flame of some powerful illuminant is the very energy of its own intrinsic nature. To abuse the gift of speech, therefore, is to abuse the very soul that God has given us. It is to use the great power of reason, of spiritual intelligence, and of our participated divine similitude, to bring confusion and ruin to the souls around us that are spiritual and immortal like ourselves.

"Many have fallen by the edge of the sword," says the inspired writer, "but not so many as have perished by their own tongue" (Ecclesiasticus xxviii. 22). For the sins of the tongue are those of blasphemy, calumny, detraction, hatred and impurity; and these may, every one of them, be deadly sins. They are sins which easily grow into habits; the young too often commit them without restraint, and the mature find themselves all covered with the leprosy of them; they warp and corrupt truth, sincerity, honesty, temper, and religion; they leave behind them, as life goes on, ever accumulating heaps of consequences, and obligations of restitution, reparation, and reconciliation; and having made a man's life bitter and unhappy, they too often succeed in strangling all his good aspirations at the hour of death, and in hurrying him, unforgiven because unrepentant, before the awful judgment of God.

It is needless at the present moment to dwell upon the widespread prevalence of evil language. You cannot walk the streets, or stand among men

and women, without being offended, or disgusted, or contaminated, by their conversation. In the poorer parts of our towns, the recklessness of oaths, curses and immodesty is, to Christian ears, more distressing than can be described. In more respectable companies, especially where there are only men, and where drink is going, the talk may be less coarse, but it is too often free, foul, and scandalous in the highest degree. And every one knows how the very children of tender years are found to use words that one would fain think they do not understand ; not only the waifs and strays of the slums and the gutter, but respectable school-children who at other times are courteous and not unrefined, will talk to one another, at times when restraint is thrown off, in language which they could never learn if their fathers and mothers and grown up neighbours did not give them daily lessons.

It is needful, therefore, to point out the evil of evil speech, and to exhort you to resolve to diminish it, and even to banish it altogether from your midst.

To speak, first, of what is commonly known as Swearing. You need not be told that an Oath may be both a holy act of homage to God and a work of charity and justice as regards our fellow-men. An oath is nothing else than to call God to witness the truth of what is asserted, or the promise which is made. A Christian firmly believes that God is the Author of all truth, Who can neither be deceived

Himself nor deceive any other, and by Whose wisdom and providence the whole world is ruled and governed. When a man calls God to witness his word, he has before his mind this all-seeing God of truth, with Whom to play false would be an impiety and a sacrilege. But just as the awful Name of God is honoured by appealing to it when the importance of the occasion requires, so it is dishonoured when, by the impatience, the levity and the passion of men, that blessed Name is taken in vain. Against this sin is the commandment of the Decalogue fulminated. It did not require the thunder of Sinai to make a rational being understand that the Almighty Creator is dishonoured by bringing His dread Name, with the familiarity of an interjection, into the ordinary pursuits of life, without reverence and without any thought of His Presence. But the revealed commandment is expressed in words of weight and emphasis, "Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain; for he shall not be unpunished that taketh His Name upon a vain thing" (Deuteronomy v. 12). Yet there are many amongst us who not only utter God's name to express surprise, to enforce the most trivial assertions, or to give utterance to their wretched temper, but who couple it with terms of cursing and execration, and dare to make use of that awful Name to call down death and damnation upon a fellow-man. It is true that we may thank God that what is strictly called Blasphemy is comparatively rare. Blasphemy is language which

is intended to insult God Himself, directly and expressly. May God preserve our people from such impiety as this! In the ancient Law it was decreed, "He that blasphemeth the Name of the Lord, dying let him die; all the multitude shall stone him" (Leviticus xxiv. 16). May God keep us from such a judgment! But to curse—and to defile the name of God by coupling it with a curse—is, as you well know, as common as it is lamentable. There are two evils in language of this kind; there is the dishonouring of God, and there is the wishing of evil to our neighbours. Nothing can excuse this detestable degradation of the most Holy of all Names. There is no conceivable cause or reason for thus dragging God's majesty in the dirt; we gain nothing by it; it is not even a gratification or a satisfaction. It is nothing but reckless intemperance of language; it is a want of self-restraint which is disgraceful in rational beings; it is coarse behaviour which marks a low and animal disposition; it is the outcome of angry temper, like the snarl of a dog. And even if the name of God is kept out of the common imprecations that we hear, yet there is generally something in them so revolting to religion and decency that any man who calls himself a Catholic should avoid them with horror. Gross words, obscene words, brutal words, disgusting words, are twisted into the form of a curse and hurled, like some noisome missile, at the souls and bodies of men and women made by God and redeemed by Jesus Christ. Let no one excuse

himself and say "he does not mean it." That is to say, such cursing is ordinarily the result of passion and of drink. Now, curses dealt out under the influence of passion are as sinful as blows; and curses that are prompted by the heat and blindness of drink are as guilty as the drink is. You say you do not mean it! But you mean temper, impatience, contempt, rage, and hate; and the words that you utter, like the blow which too frequently goes with them, intensify the evil passions of your heart, for which you must answer before God. For passion can be curbed, occasions can be avoided, drink can be renounced; and those who take no pains to practise Christian self-restraint are guilty of the foul curses which, in their better moments, they may perhaps be ashamed of. It cannot be denied that the universal and continual use of what is justly called "bad language" by working people and the poor, is a hideous and scandalous feature of our boasted civilisation. Every decent working man—and woman, too, it should be added, for it is a disgraceful fact that the women are often more to blame than the men—should make a promise to Almighty God before His altar, and every night at night prayers, never to allow a wicked word to pass their lips; and any one who finds he has transgressed should take himself to task, and punish himself, and perseveringly invoke our Lord Jesus Christ that his speech may be like the speech of Jesus, Mary and Joseph in the holy house of Nazareth. And it must be added that it is not

only the uneducated and poverty-stricken dwellers in wretched neighbourhoods who offend God thus. There is a license and a coarseness among men of nearly every class, which it only requires circumstances of time, place, and excitement to bring out offensively. A man more or less educated will not hesitate, in a moment of anger or surprise, to use the Name of God, and sometimes to use it with a curse. There are men of good position, religious-minded, and generally kind-hearted, who habitually, when put out or offended, break out into scandalous language, and swear at their servants and work-people, or even at their wives and children, or their neighbours. How few of us are brought up to practise Christian self-restraint! And how ugly is the exhibition of natural human nature, untransformed to the likeness of Christ! Yet this is the transformation which lies within the reach of every Christian heart. "Ye are risen with Christ!" cries out St. Paul; therefore "mortify your members"—"lay aside anger, indignation, malice, blasphemy, filthy speech out of your mouth" (Colossians iii. 5, 8).

This last expression of the Apostle reminds us to say one word—for as little should be said as possible—on the too prevalent vice of improper conversation. What St. Paul calls "filthy speech" is a practice which not infrequently begins very early in life. Children know it is wrong—yet not all the wrong that there is in it. When such a fault is noticed the child should be carefully corrected. But

in this case the greater part of the mischief must always be secret and hidden. Pastors, therefore, parents and teachers can only secure it by establishing in children the love of the holiness in Jesus and of the purity of His Blessed Mother. It may indeed be laid down as a rule that the inculcation of purity and modesty in the young is effected much more easily by this indirect method, than by direct exhortation against a vice which, if possible, should not be named amongst Christians. The love of the Blessed Sacrament, devotion to Our Lady, suitable prayers, the reading of the histories of the Saints, the absence of undesirable books and newspapers, and the healthy atmosphere of Christian homes and schools—these are the means on which we must rely to alleviate one of the worst evils of the day. And what is here said of children may be said with equal truth of young men and young women. As regards immodest words let our Catholic flock remember this —that such words are always wrong and generally grievously sinful ; that they are shameful and disgraceful, more especially in us who believe in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ on our altars ; that they lead to increased laxity in matters of chastity by breaking down the barriers of modesty ; and that they very often cause the spiritual ruin of those to whom they are spoken.

There is another class of evil words which are fertile in sinful consequences. Words which injure our neighbour may be divided into two classes—

words that damage and words that provoke. It is truly a matter of amazement to witness the recklessness with which even good people will indulge in slander and defamation. They do it sometimes, it must be said, out of malice; and generally out of revenge. It is the rarest thing in the world to find a really magnanimous heart that will overlook a slight, and not return evil for evil. And yet, is not this the least one can do in order to obey the precept of our Lord and Saviour? Let us think on this, all we who speak words of malice, who throw out base insinuations, who talk bitterly, behind the backs of our friends and of those whom we set down as our enemies; we who carry tales about, who impute motives, and who rejoice in telling unkind secrets.

But some of the worst offenders against charity in words are those who, with little or no malice or wicked intention, indulge in prolonged, idle, and unrestrained talk. If people talk, they must have something to talk about; and there are few subjects so handy, so stimulating, and so inexhaustible as the affairs of our neighbours. Here, as in many other instances, the occasion begets the sin. Very few of us have nothing to reproach ourselves with on this subject. There is, in many people who are otherwise God-fearing and even pious, an unscrupulousness, a want of conscience, in talking about other people, which not unfrequently leads to mortal sins of defamation—sins which cannot be forgiven until restitution is made; and such a habit is always

something in the nature of a moral taint, a poison in the blood, a leprosy, which spoils all prayer, vitiates good works, and intercepts the grace of Jesus Christ. For unkindness in speaking of our brothers is disloyalty to the God who made us all for Himself.

The bitter words, that provoke, are also to be repressed and avoided with all the force that comes from strong effort and the grace of our Redeemer. There are few impulses in our nature so strong as that which urges us to sting the person whose words or acts have stung ourselves. We are ready to answer names by names, accusation by accusation, abuse by abuse, contempt by contempt, insulting attacks by insulting retorts. Sometimes the heat and passion of the moment prompts us to say things we are sorry for afterwards; at other times we brood over our retaliation, and laboriously shape out hard and hurtful speech, as the savage in primeval times shaped, in the gloom of his cave, the deadly flints that were to cut and maim his enemy. Who can tell the harm that is done by bitter words? They are seldom or never forgotten. Long after we ourselves have sincerely repented of them, they remain festering and smarting in the memories of those to whom they were addressed. Explain them as we may, make what reparation we may, their effect is to prevent friends and brethren from ever again being quite the same to us; to set up a separation and an estrangement between Christian hearts which will last to the day of our death.

All these different kinds of evil speech—the taking in vain of God's Holy Name, cursing, reviling, immodesty, detraction, and bitterness—we are called upon to "put away." Let us never forget that we must answer for our lives to the God who made us, and that the day of His judgment is nigh. St. James goes so far as to assert that the man who faileth not in his words, the same is a perfect man (St. James iii. 2). One grand reason for this is, that to avoid sins of the tongue implies a great and unusual effort of that Christian self-restraint which is to the grace of God what the sails of the sailor's barque are to the gracious wind that fills them. And for this effort, as for every other effort in our Christian life, three things are required—reflection, resolution, and the Holy Sacraments. Some reflections have been here placed before us; let us take them honestly to heart, and look into our consciences. Then must come the resolution to refrain and give up; the resolution to avoid certain occasions, especially indulgence in drink, which is the most fertile source of evil language; and the resolution to watch over ourselves morning, noon, and night. And, lastly, we must use the Sacrament of Penance, and the Holy Communion of Christ's Body; for these are the fountain of our Saviour's merciful help, and here we shall find that strength without which all our efforts and struggles will certainly be in vain. But could anything better deserve the most strenuous efforts on the part of all who believe in God and eternity than the banishment of

evil language? What is there that would bring about a happier and a more immediate change for the better in every town, in every street, in every family? What is there that would go so far in putting an end to the disgraceful scenes which are so common in every large centre of population, and which justly deserve to be called hell upon earth? What else would lift up the poor man so effectively as to cease to speak like a savage? What would purify social intercourse so quickly as delicacy in every word? What would bring religion more forcibly home to us and better prepare us to put on the likeness of Christ, than the dedication of the great human, rational, and spiritual gift of speech to the honour and glory of the God who gave it?

XXIII

ON READING

Books and newspapers may be occasions of sin; immoral books; sensuous books; idle reading—Precautions with regards to newspapers—Books destructive of faith—Good books tend to give an adequate knowledge of our holy religion. and to instruct us in the spiritual life.

The printing press is one of the greatest of the forces of the modern world. Books and newspapers are not only beyond all counting, but they are absolute necessaries of life, even to the poorest; and they work more good and more mischief than armies and parliaments. It will not, therefore, be inopportune to say a few words about Reading.

There are those who read too much, or with too little discretion and self-restraint; and there are those who neglect to read what they ought. Let us first speak of want of discretion in reading.

It stands to reason that if a book or a newspaper is an occasion of sin, it has to be given up or let alone. All Catholics are taught—and no other doctrine can be reconciled with the Gospel of Jesus Christ—that if a thing is sinful to do, it is sinful to expose oneself unnecessarily to a temptation to do it, and sinful to dwell upon it in the heart, with

desire, or even with any kind of lingering consideration. This is especially true of all that regards anger, hatred, or impurity. With respect to theft, violence murder, or impiety, it may be that most minds are able to hear about them, read about them, or think about them, without feeling any promptings to commit a sinful act. Even this, however, has large and numerous exceptions. There are plenty of foolish, inexperienced and roughly-educated boys and girls to whom descriptions of violence, blood, drunkenness, and riot, are exciting in a dangerous degree. Pictures of crime, of impossible heroes and heroines, of romantic marriages and tragic adventures, excite that curiosity, that restlessness and that strange desire to imitate, which are found in all human beings before time and sad experience have sobered them. But in matters relating to modesty and purity, there is far more danger; because the passions are, as a rule, much more easily stirred up in these things than in others which are against the laws of God and our nature. The duty, therefore, of all who fear God and would save their immortal souls, is perfectly clear. You cannot read about, dwell upon, or entertain in your heart and thought, any scene, description, sentiment, or feeling, which it would be wrong to put into act, or which urges and leads to sinful act. All such reading and indulgence of the imagination is sinful, either because they set up sinful thinking, or because they lead to sinful acts, or for both reasons.

Although these are elementary principles of Christian morality, it is by no means superfluous to state them and dwell upon them. The idea that there is no harm in thoughts and desires is not unknown, even among Catholics. It is not always easy to persuade those who are accustomed to the freedom of modern manners that it is sinful to dwell on immodest thoughts, or that it is a duty to restrain impure feelings, and to reject imaginations which defile the heart. The nature of man is such, that thoughts and suggestions of this kind, and of other kinds, are sure to trouble us as long as we live. But we are bound to use reasonable means to resist them; and, above all, we are bound to avoid those occasions which give rise to them, and never to expose our weakness to any temptation which it is in our power to avoid.

The occasions of sinful imagination which come through reading may not be absolutely the most dangerous; but they are so common and so easily found that they have a special danger of their own. There are many different kinds of evil reading. First, there are books which are absolutely obscene and immoral. All decent people are on their guard against these. They are only fit to be put in the fire. Yet they are multiplying amongst us. There is no need to say that all parents and responsible persons should quietly and carefully keep them out of the way of the young. It is true, no doubt, that no precaution or vigilance will prevent any one, young or old, from getting such books if he wishes. As to this, we can

only trust to a careful bringing up, to the confessional, and to the grace of God. But care and watchfulness will do something, and will, at any rate, save innocent youth from stumbling unawares upon things that may prove their ruin in soul and body.

Next, there are the books which are not absolutely and grossly immoral, but which are sensual, soft, and suggestive. Of these it may be said that no one, as a rule, reads them except for sensual reasons. They are not generally masterpieces ; but they gratify a morbid interest, and stimulate feelings which are never very far from sin. All stories or novels in which the passion of love is strongly and warmly depicted, come under this class. Such books are unhealthy to the last degree. They prematurely arouse, and unduly excite, what the spiritual soul can with difficulty control even under the most favourable circumstances. They sap all wholesomeness and manliness of character, and lead to selfishness, peevishness, and laziness. Such books as these lie about everywhere, and are read by rich and poor. Idle ladies read them ; but so do business men, clerks, servants, and working people—who thus not only do harm to themselves directly, but, by squandering their time, expose themselves to loss, and are tempted to dishonesty and neglect of duty. Catholics ought clearly to understand that because a book is openly sold, and read, and talked about, it is not therefore lawful to read. The rule of restraint, and the law of mortification, hold in this as in other things. It is far better to be

behind our friends in our acquaintance with the talk of the hour, than to have our minds stained by doubtful reading. Innocence may be smiled at, but it is respected. Even if we have to endure ridicule, we shall be the happier for taking the side of God and of purity. Let us not be deluded by the talk which is now so common—that the time has come for certain serious aspects of morality to be openly and plainly discussed. This is not the Christian rule or teaching. Such problems may and must be discussed, and as plainly as need be ; but not by idle laymen, young women, or curious boys. Such topics require training, gravity, and circumspection. But the writers who are now setting the fashion of throwing them to the multitude care little, we may be sure, for the interests of truth or reformation, provided they can stir up unpleasant curiosity, and sell their books.

It may be said with truth that all idle reading is hurtful and bad. To read, for honest recreation, even silly books that are not otherwise objectionable, need not be condemned. But continuous idle reading of romantic, sentimental, or exciting narratives, spoils one's life and causes a general laziness and looseness in one's whole nature, unfitting the mind for exertion and the body for self-denial. The inordinate reading of newspapers should be avoided on similar grounds. There are all kinds of newspapers and cheap periodicals—good, bad, and indifferent. Catholics must remember that they are not to take the tone of their moral feelings from newspapers, but from the teach-

ing and traditions of their holy religion. It cannot be denied that there is, on the whole, a very free and lax interpretation, on the part of the newspaper press, of that precept of St. Paul which prescribes that certain things should "not be so much as named" among Christians (Ephesians v. 3). Because a matter is reported in a newspaper, it by no means follows that it is right or proper for a Christian to read it, much less to dwell upon it, or to let it get into the hands of those for whom one is responsible. The standard of right and wrong in things of this kind is constantly in danger of being lowered. Our duty is, by precept and by example, to uphold and maintain it. It may not be possible for us to do much in purifying the periodical press—although the disapproval of God-fearing readers is never without its effect—but we may at least preserve our own conscience free from stain, and help many souls who otherwise would be carried away by the evil and corrupting tendencies of the age. Even when the newspaper is free from objection, it is easy to lose a great deal of time over it. It may be necessary or convenient to know what is going on in the world. But there can be no need of our absorbing all the rumours, all the guesses and gossip, all the petty incidents, all the innumerable paragraphs in which the solid news appears half drowned, like the houses and hedges when the floods are out. This is idle, and it is absolutely bad for brain and character. There is a kind of attraction towards petty and de-

sultory reading of this kind which is sure to leave its mark on the present generation. The newspaper presents not only news, but ideas, reflections, views, inferences, and conclusions of every kind. As the reader takes in all this prepared and digested matter, he is deluded with the notion that he is thinking and exercising his mind. He is doing nothing of the kind. He is putting on another man's clothes, and fitting himself out with another man's ideas. To do this habitually is to live the life of a child; one is amused and occupied, and one is enabled to talk second-hand talk; but that is all. Men were better men, if they thought at all, in the days when there was less to read. It is pitiable to reflect how many there are, in all the ranks of life, who depend for ideas on the utterances of their newspapers. And who, after all, are the writers of newspapers? Men by no means specially endowed or qualified; men who have to write in a hurry, with little learning or training, on all kinds of subjects, some of them the most momentous; and men who have strong temptations to speak rashly and flippantly on all things connected with religion and morality. Immoderate newspaper reading leads, therefore, to much loss of time, and does no good, either to the mind or to the heart.

Books and periodicals which are calculated to weaken or pervert our religious faith are to be avoided, like immoral books. This is a duty which springs from the natural law, and is quite antecedent

to any prohibition on the part of the Church. The Catholic should, therefore, refrain from reading anti-Catholic or anti-religious books. The arguments of such books may be, and probably have been, abundantly refuted. But the refutation is not always at hand, and it is not every reader who knows how to answer. There are in existence, unfortunately, at the present moment, many books of undoubted literary ability and interest which attack, generally in an indirect way, the existence of God, the divinity of our Lord, the Church, and man's moral responsibility. When the Catholic layman reads these productions, as he does far too freely, he is astonished and disturbed to find so strong a case made out against his faith. But why is he astonished and puzzled? It is generally because he knows so very little about his own religion. He has learnt his Catechism, perhaps, as a child, and has heard a sermon now and then; but the evidences, the explanations, and exposition of Christian doctrine have had little or no interest for him; and hence he is more or less at the mercy of the heretic and the sophist. It is evident that men and women of so little instruction have no right to expose themselves to the arguments of the enemy. And when they do come across such arguments, in their newspapers or general reading, they should know that it is chiefly their own ignorance that makes the difficulties seem so formidable. The Church, if she had her own way, would keep such writings out of the hands of her children. No book

which is known to be prohibited should be read by any Catholic, at least without proper advice.

If bad and indiscreet reading is productive of much harm, there is no limit to the possibilities of spiritual profit which arise from good reading. A good book is a faithful teacher, a true and faithful friend, and a never-failing helper in the things that concern salvation. Few Catholics take a proper view of the usefulness and the advantage of being well instructed in their religion. If a man's mind and heart are to take hold of his religion and to keep hold of it, his religion must be, by some means or other, worked into his mind and heart. The mind has many faculties, and so has the heart and imagination. Therefore, to grasp one's holy faith firmly and lovingly one must reason about it, one must follow it to conclusions and results, one must view it in the varying lights of history, of science, and of society, one must survey it as it touches the world at a thousand points, and feel it as it ministers to the innumerable aspirations of one's own nature. This kind of instruction is begun in childhood, when the teacher and the priest at the altar first bring the young intelligence of the child and its dawning sensibility face to face with God, with Christ, and with the sacraments. But by the time the young man or woman takes up the work of life it cannot be more than begun. How can it be continued and extended? The answer is, chiefly by reading. The spoken instructions of the Church's ministers are

most profitable, and priests in charge of souls endeavour to obey the holy Council of Trent and to mingle instruction with all their exhortations. But a book will go further, and make things more secure. Since in these days all, or nearly all, are able to read, and to read easily, there ought undoubtedly to be a great advance on the part of Catholics in the knowledge of religion by means of print. And, happily, it cannot be pretended that there is nothing to read. If we consider, for example, the list of the publications of the Catholic Truth Society, we find among them instructions of every kind :—exposition of doctrine, controversy, history, biography, devotion, and moral and social papers, besides tales and verse. No one is too poor to be able to afford the halfpenny or the penny which is the price of most of these brochures and leaflets; whilst there are books and larger pamphlets for those who look for something more extended, and the bound volumes of the series form a small library of the handiest and the most useful kind. For readers of greater education and leisure there are materials in abundance which it is unnecessary to specify at this moment. A catalogue of any of our London, Dublin, or New York Catholic publishers, will suggest to every one how many subjects there are on which it would be useful to be well-informed, and how much there is to be known in the grand and wide Kingdom of the holy Catholic faith. No one can love Our Lord who does not know about

Him, and no one can be truly loyal to the Church who does not take the trouble to study her.

If instruction is so deeply important, devotion and piety are not less so. With most of us, prayer is very short and very slight. There is one means which will both make us more regular in our daily prayer, and deepen our earnestness in that sacred duty. This is, Spiritual Reading. If our reading were merely instruction and information about God and divine things, our prayers would be all the better for it. To know more of the things of the Kingdom of Heaven is to walk abroad in the sunshine of a glorious universe whose very sight lifts us above the earth and inclines the heart to seek God. But when, in addition, we find in our book devout thoughts, pious aspirations, good advice, solid exhortation, and the example of the Saints, then the minutes of our prayer, which before seemed hard to fill up, overflow with the outpourings of a heart which all these things stimulate and inflame. No one should be without a book about Our Lord, His Sacred Heart, His blessed Mother, or the Saints. No one should be without a book on the Mass. Besides one's prayer-book, one should have manuals of meditation and of instruction on Christian virtues. More extended devotional treatises will keep alive the piety of those for whom they are suitable. But all Catholics, whatever their condition, should make use of Spiritual Reading. It is impossible to exaggerate the effect on the lives and characters of Christians of the words of holy men, of

the heroic acts of the martyrs, of the example of the lovers of Jesus in every age, of the contemplation of Our Lady's prerogatives and goodness, and above all of the story of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The "Following of Christ," the "Spiritual Combat," the "Devout Life" of St. Francis de Sales, and other books of a like nature, are at once a guide to virtue, an encouragement to prayer, and an influence drawing the heart daily nearer to God. The reading of Holy Scripture, of the sermons and conferences of distinguished preachers, and of the penetrating devotional books in which our language is by no means deficient, is adapted to sanctify the house, and to keep out of it, to a greater or less degree, that flood of objectionable printed matter which overflows the land at the present moment. Priests and laity cannot do more for souls than to encourage by every means in their power good and cheap Catholic literature—instruction, devotion, tales, and periodicals—and to bring it within the reach of every class of the faithful. All read; they must read, and they will read. Let us strive to check the evils of bad reading by the dissemination of that which is good.

XXIV

MIXED MARRIAGES

Marriage a solemn and divine action—The Church always condemns and abhors Mixed Marriages; and this for reasons of divine law—The profanation of the Sacrament —The danger of loss of Faith—The danger of losing the children—What conditions are required for a dispensation —A grave and weighty reason required—Engagements with non-Catholics should be avoided.

THERE are grave reasons for thinking that a certain evil, which has often been denounced by the Church and by the pastors of the Church, is coming to be regarded amongst us with an indifference or toleration which is partly due to the want of instruction. We refer to MIXED MARRIAGES. There is reason to fear that a certain laxity of practice and of feeling is growing up here and there in regard to these. It is too often observed that a young man or a young woman, if the chance offers, or if inclination prompts, is as ready to marry a non-Catholic as a Catholic, and expects, as a matter of course, that the priest will acquiesce, and that the required dispensation will be obtained. Whatever may be said of marriages of this kind—and no doubt it is often right to allow and sanction them—yet they are always and everywhere a serious and anxious matter; they carry with

them the gravest responsibility, and they require to be considered most carefully in the light of Catholic teaching and tradition.

Christian Marriage is one of the seven Sacraments of the Church of Jesus Christ. That is, it is not only a binding contract entailing mutual obligations and legal consequences, but it is an act which is sanctified by the special outpouring of the Blood of the Cross upon the souls of the contracting parties. The powerful grace given in the sacrament of Matrimony is intended to assist human nature to fulfil with fidelity the duties of the married state—to make good husbands, good wives, and good fathers and mothers of children. When the minister of God joins the hands of a man and a woman before God's altar, in that act there falls upon them the benediction of the God and Father Who created them, and Whom they must serve and love all the days of their life. It is a solemn and holy moment; a moment which God claims for Himself; a moment when no one who fears God will refuse to obey God, and to humble his heart and bend his knee before God's sweet and fatherly ordinances.

The views of the Catholic Church in regard to the marriages of Catholics with non-Catholics are very definite and precise. She has always blamed and denounced them. She has always held them to be unlawful and pernicious. Whether she considers the profanation of her sacred rights by the admission of unbelievers to participation in those rites, or the

danger of the Catholic party's giving up the Faith, or the probability of the loss of the children—she cannot but dread and proscribe them. If at times she permits them, it is only for pressing reasons, and very unwillingly, and she never allows this without exacting certain promises and guarantees, so as to diminish as far as possible the dangers and the evil consequences.[1]

Let it be carefully observed that the Church, in thus condemning Mixed Marriages, is not *making* a law, but is rather putting in force a Divine Law already in existence. Every Catholic is bound by the law of God not to place himself in danger of the loss of his Faith. No Catholic is permitted by God to marry under such circumstances as to expose the children of his marriage to be brought up without due instruction in their holy religion. The Church does not make these laws; she finds them made —immutably fixed and awfully sanctioned by the Creator Himself. It requires very little reflection to see that these Divine ordinances, and many others which result from them, are almost invariably put in peril in a Mixed Marriage.

Let the good Catholic first consider the grievous sin of *profanation of the Sacrament.* The non-Catholic party joins in the act and reception of the Sacrament of Matrimony. Making every charitable allowance, we cannot but lay it down as a general rule that by this participation one of God's holiest rites is pro-

[1] See the Instruction *De Matrimoniis Mixtis*, Nov. 15, 1858, and the Letter of Propaganda to the English Bishops, of March 25, 1868.

faned. Let us suppose that the non-Catholic is not to blame for his unbelief; let him have to the utmost the benefit of whatever uncertainty there may be as to his having had sufficient opportunity for knowing the truth. It is not only unbelief which desecrates a holy ordinance. Can we doubt that in the enormous majority of instances the non-Catholic party is in deadly sin? Even the members of our Catholic flock, it is much to be feared, frequently profane Holy Matrimony by being married in mortal sin. But if this be too often true of Catholics, who believe in the Sacrament of Penance, who are carefully taught what dispositions are required for a worthy marriage, and who are exhorted to repent, to confess and to receive our Lord's Body and Blood as a preparation—what must be said of those who believe in none of these things and have none of these helps, but who marry with the sins of their youth upon their heads, unconcerned and unrepentant? He who dared to profane the ancient Temple was struck by God, and would have died but for the intercession of the High Priest. But the Sacraments of the New Law are far more sacred than the Temple built with hands. Would to God we could understand how awful and terrible it is for a young man or a young woman to contemplate entrance into married life by sharing in a sacrilege like this! What blessing on their home and on their children can they look for, who so far forget their God!

Experience, too, surely teaches that in a non-

Catholic marriage there is the greatest danger of *loss of Faith*. The Catholic party is often in character the weaker of the two. It is right and natural to wish to be one in heart and feeling with the partner with whom life has to be spent. But it is very hard when this praiseworthy impulse is in conflict with one's duty to God and to conscience. There will be constant pressure, constant temptation, to think, to act, to worship, as the other does. Division and difference, which are always so painful in a family, make themselves felt in Mixed Marriages every day and hour, sometimes in little things, sometimes in great. Will Faith hold out long against this? The Catholic is probably isolated among Protestants—one against many. They pity, they argue, they entreat. The church may be far off and out of the way. The priest may be hardly ever seen. It is difficult to get to Mass, difficult to approach the Sacraments. How often is a poor wife made to feel that her religion, though tolerated, is not liked? To what straits is she put to get to confession, to observe her Catholic laws, even to say her Catholic prayers and to keep her Catholic books? If it be the man who is the Catholic, he is likely to make a very poor struggle against a persistent and clever wife. But, be it man or woman, the effort is like rolling a wheel uphill; it requires constant watchfulness, constant hard work. The least yielding, the slightest relaxation, the smallest giving way for the sake of peace, and in too many

instances Faith is lost and the enemy has conquered. Is it in human nature to be exposed to danger like this, and not to fall? Can we wonder that the persecuted and harassed soul throws up the contest, and chooses what is easiest to flesh and blood? Can we wonder that violence is done to conscience, that the once good Catholic sinks into religious indifference, or openly renounces the inheritance of the Catholic Faith?

The anxiety, and therefore the danger, will be much increased by the consideration of the *children*. No Catholic, however ready he or she may be to contract marriage with a non-Catholic, likes to think of the children being brought up Protestants. There is a very uncomfortable text about certain people who would have been better off if they had been flung into the sea with a mill-stone round their necks; and Catholics know that the persons here referred to are, first and foremost, those by whose fault their children come to lose their immortal souls. To bring children into a house and family where Catholic teaching and training will be interfered with at every turn—if not, indeed, positively made impossible—is, in the light of the Judgment, a most serious thing. Children are difficult enough, as we all know, to bring up in the fear of God. With all the advantages of a Catholic school, of the priest's careful instruction, of daily Catholic prayers and constant good example, there are far too many who turn out poorly after all. But in a half-Protestant family, it is like tempting God to

expect good Catholic children. The very fact that there is a division in the household prepares the children to be indifferent. The father goes one way, the mother another; so what can it matter? They have to face ridicule and danger; they hear arguments they cannot answer; they are influenced by human respect at their most sensitive age. Their Catholicism is on sufferance; it is barely tolerated; it has to be hidden, to be interrupted, to be apologised for. It is never easy to induce children to live up to a Religion of Faith, of Sacraments, of self-denial. But how is the difficulty increased when one of their parents, with ever so many of their relations, does not believe in it? It requires many years of practical teaching to give a child an adequate conception of the Church of Christ, with all its history, its treasures, and its position in the redeemed world. But how can this be ever expected, when to his infant perceptions the idea of the Church is blurred and confused with noisy chapels and overflowing houses of heresy and schism, which are all that the people round about know in the place of Christ's unspotted Spouse!

Perhaps it is the husband who is the Protestant. He may be an honourable man and desirous of carrying out the promises he has made. But if he is dishonourable, or capricious, or unreasonable, who can answer for what will happen? He may be seized with what he calls religious scruples; he may protest that he did not understand what he was promising; he may simply stand on his rights and

brutally resolve to be master. These things seem improbable—impossible—in the pleasant days before marriage, when he is ready to profess anything and to promise everything. But one of the truest and most universal pieces of experience is that marriage brings its trials, its disillusions and its sufferings. The Christian wife knows how to bear these ; but if, in addition to what is otherwise sure to come, she has also to fight for the souls of her little ones, may God help her ! The Christian is taught to bear, and to bear with courage, the crosses of a married life ; and after all there are satisfactions as well as crosses. But how can she bear to see her boys and girls in infancy, childhood, and maturity, strangers to her own holy and sweet religion—to hear them scoff at the Blessed Sacrament and at Mary, Mother of God—to know that they suspect and hate God's priests—and to see them grow up without any softness of heart to their God, without any sense of the sufferings of Christ, in worldly, unspiritual, fleshly Protestantism ! Or it may be that the father is a Catholic, and that it is the mother who is the non-Catholic. It is under these circumstances that undoubtedly the greatest danger occurs to the children of a Mixed Marriage. It is the mother who during the years of infancy, and even longer, forms, shapes, and moulds the mind and heart of the child. To do this rightly and adequately, she must first be formed and prepared herself ; that is, she must be a thoroughly religious woman, filled with Faith, and sufficiently

instructed for her position. The Protestant mother may send the children to the Catholic school, to the Church, and to the Catechism ; but she cannot give that loving help, that sympathetic encouragement, that daily and hourly prompting, which ought to be the mother's part in Christian education. She may see that they go to Mass and Sacraments, but she cannot kneel beside them before the Blessed Sacrament and teach them to bow their heads before the Presence of Jesus. She may hear them say their prayers, but they never catch any spiritual feeling from her accent, or learn as they would from a Catholic mother how a Catholic ought to pray. Therefore she is a mother and not a mother—for she is not the mother of their heart and of their spirit. She is a stranger to them, and a stranger in those very things which are their life and eternal destiny. She is often, indeed, worse than a stranger ; she is an enemy and a destroyer. Even while she loves her children, she robs them. She lets them grow up in ignorance of their Catholic inheritance ; she makes them what she is herself; and in the end, as may easily be foreseen, they have neither knowledge of Catholicism nor love of it, and drift away into unbelief.

The dangers here referred to are serious and real, and they exist to a greater or less extent in every case of a marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic. By the law of God, therefore, which the Church interprets, such marriages cannot be allowed unless such precautions are taken as to render the

danger more remote or less imminent, and unless, moreover, there exists also a good and substantial reason why the marriage should take place. Hence, whenever a Catholic is allowed to marry a non-Catholic, three promises must be made. First of all, *both* parties must promise to bring up the children, if any, in the full exercise of the Catholic Faith. Next, the non-Catholic party must promise to allow the Catholic perfect freedom in living up to his or her religion. And, thirdly, the Catholic party must undertake to use all reasonable and prudent means to convert the other to the true religion. These promises should be carefully explained to both parties. It is no kindness to them to abate or diminish any part of their significance. It may truly be said that, as far as the good of religion is concerned, and also as far as concerns the spiritual and eternal interests of the parties themselves, it is better they should get married as Protestants—if they persist in marrying—than that they should be joined in marriage by the Catholic priest, and yet not understand, or not honestly accept, the conditions here laid down. For less evil will in all probability come of the former than of the latter.

But it must be carefully observed that to render such marriages lawful, or to enable the Bishop to give a dispensation, it is not enough that these promises should be made. There is required, in addition, a good, solid, and substantial *reason*. As to what reason will suffice, each pastor or confessor will, when occasion arises, be able to afford all need-

ful explanations. Here there is one most important observation to be made. Seeing what is the spirit of the Church, as interpreter of the law of God, on the subject of Mixed Marriages, it is the duty of every good and loyal Catholic young man and young woman to take care not to become entangled in a non-Catholic engagement. For these things begin by degrees, and it is possible both to avoid entering on them and to check them before things have gone too far. Consideration of money, business, connection, and other worldly motives are not blameworthy in themselves. It may be admitted that suitable wives and husbands are not always easy to find. But Faith should be considered first; and no mere personal liking or foolish infatuation should be allowed to obscure the grave responsibility which is involved in a non-Catholic marriage.

In this country, persons who marry a non-Catholic, even without permission, are married *validly*, and cannot be "married" over again. But they commit a grievous sin in defying the Church. They also sin by appearing before a non-Catholic minister, or by going to a registrar's office. If the Church dispenses them, she will marry them. She does not like such marriages, even whilst she permits them; she will not say Mass over them nor give them the solemn nuptial blessing; but she will marry them.

It may be, dear children in Jesus Christ, that some who have listened to what has been here said, will consider it too hard, and somewhat uncalled for.

There may be Catholics who have married Protestants, children who are the offspring of such marriages, nay, even the Protestant parties themselves, who may feel that the results of these unions have not been so bad as we have described. We may be told that there are numbers of families where the Protestant father is honourable, just, and kind, where he respects the Catholic Faith, comes to church, and will perhaps one day become a Catholic; where the Protestant mother is careful and considerate; where the Catholic wife or husband has no anxiety, and the children are growing up as good Catholics as Holy Church could wish. Representations of this nature must be admitted to have their force and weight. There is truth in them. And that they *are* true is owing, in great measure, to the zeal and exertions of the pastors of souls in this country. No one will even adequately describe the unwearied labour of the priest in finding out, instructing, exhorting, directing, and paternally managing those wilful and unreflecting young people of both sexes who insist on marrying out of the Church. This unremitting hard work, combined with Catholic instincts, the natural goodness of many non-Catholics, and the grace and mercy of God, have resulted, as we believe, in considerably diminishing the losses which might have been expected from Mixed Marriages. But we must end as we began. Once let ignorance, indifference, or disobedience grow to such an extent as to do away with, or seriously diminish,

the abhorrence which our flock ought to have of contemplating holy matrimony with a stranger to our holy religion, and apostasy with the loss of children will come on us like a flood. Evil is evil, and danger is danger; we may mitigate the one and diminish the other; but to refuse to give them their real names is to give in to the evil and to perish in the danger.

XXV

ON RITUAL

In Ritual matters, authority necessary, but explanation as to history and law most useful—Rites and ceremonies not absolutely needed ; but are profitable to impress the heart, to teach the mind, and to stimulate devotion.

The controversies and discussions which perpetually agitate all religious bodies outside of the Catholic Church generally make themselves felt even within the Church's fold. It is at one time doctrine, at another ceremonial, which furnishes the object of contention. The truths which non-Catholics for a time possess, having carried them away in their secession from Catholicism, are sure, sooner or later, to be attacked and undermined ; and the ritual observances which express dogmatic truths, which embody sacramental realities, and which explain and guard the faith, cannot fail to share the fate of the beliefs themselves. They are debated and fought over with equal violence by those who believe little, and those who believe a great deal. The former consider them superstitious, and the latter uphold them as ancient, pious, and salutary ; and as neither party owns any real authority, such discussions are sometimes bitter, and always endless ; or if they

cease, and one side obtains the victory, such victory is only obtained by the slow movement of public opinion—a tribunal whose decisions are generally in the direction of indifferentism, and which in any case has never been recognised as having any authority on religious matters.

Within the Catholic Church there is authority, and a living, articulate voice. That voice can, and does, speak decisively on both doctrine and ritual. But the faithful require more than decisions. In the Church's decisions there is both law and history. It is very useful for Catholics to follow doctrine to its sources, and to trace its exposition down the stream of time. It is very useful to know the origins of ceremonial, to learn the meaning of holy rites, to be possessed of the significance of the names, the vestures, the places, the actions, and the language, which have grown up around the creeds and the solemn observances of the Church during the many centuries of her history. A few words, therefore, on ritual will not be out of place.

Any outward function connected with religious worship is called a rite or a ceremony. The two words mean almost the same thing; but the word rite signifies something more elaborate, or more dignified, than a mere ceremony; and a rite may consist of many ceremonies. Let us begin, then, by saying that, in a certain sense, there is not, in our holy religion, any absolute necessity for any rites or ceremonies at all. True, no one can either preach,

sacrifice, or confer a sacrament without external acts and words. But setting aside the mere essential words and gestures, these things might all be done without any of what is generally called ritual. The apostles wore no special vestments. The primitive celebration of the Holy Eucharist, that is the Mass, was probably confined almost to the offering, the words of consecration, and the communion. Baptism was only the pouring of the water accompanied by the words of the form. The place of assembly was an ordinary room. For a long time there were neither lights, nor incense, nor even chant.

But these very facts lead us to understand the reason of the natural and inevitable rise of ritual proper. It is natural to man to surround august institutions and important acts with expressive and dignified forms. The court, the army, and the bench of justice have all their appropriate outward ceremonial. The striking and unusual vesture, the dignity of architecture, the gradation of attendants, the barriers of observance, the forms of reverence, the solemnity of decree and of sentence—all these are good and suitable for man, as he is made and as he is formed. It is not to the point to insist that sovereigns are sovereigns even without their crowns and robes of state, that a judge could pronounce sentence as well in his own office as in court, and that a soldier's handsome uniform does not make him shoot straighter or march better. Any one can see the fallacy of this line of thought. The ritual

or ceremonial of any institution is not of the essence of that institution; but it adds to its efficiency. Law and ordinance might go on without it, but the human beings for whom these are intended would miss their full effect, and indeed, in many cases, miss them altogether.

But to the Church—to the Kingdom of Christ upon earth—these considerations apply with especial force. In the Christian dispensation, such as it has been left to us since the Spirit was given at the great Pentecost, we have a Kingdom which is both visible and invisible; which wields powerful spiritual force, on the one hand, and is recognisable by the eye and the ear on the other. To reject the Church's spirituality and to deny her visibility, are equally un-Catholic and equally disastrous. It is most important, therefore, that every means should be offered to the unstable and easily distracted intelligence of men whereby they may be helped to keep before their minds that which is out of their bodily sight, and at the same time to maintain a steady and practical grasp of that continuation of Christ's earthly presence which remains with us in the sacramental system. Thus we require ritual in order to impress the heart, to teach the mind and to stimulate devout emotion.

First, to impress the heart. All outward worship tends to remind us of the invisible God. Still more forcibly are we reminded of Him when we join in worship with other men, and when the sight and the sound of united prayer testify to the common belief

of many hearts. But with the Incarnation, new and more impressive methods of realising God have been vouchsafed to us. In Jesus—in His human acts, words, and traits—we read the infinite solicitude, the boundless mercy, and the unwearying friendliness of the Almighty God; we read these things translated into a tongue that our intelligences can follow and take in. Moreover, Jesus, although He is now at the right hand of God, has left us His Human Life, His Priesthood, His Sacrifice, His Sacraments; and out of all these there has been fashioned a glorious ritual, full of His presence, full of His thousandfold impressiveness, which continually proclaims to the unheeding hearts of men the nearness of their God.

The great liturgical action of the Mass is much more than united or public worship in the ordinary sense of the word. It gathers us round Jesus—round Jesus in His most awful and royal act. It gathers us where the Redeeming Blood is known by us to flow as upon Calvary. Can we forget God as long as we are faithful to the Mass? Can we readily forget Him as long as we frequent His temples, see His priests, use His sacraments, honour His Blessed Mother? Can we forget Him when we behold the holy name of Jesus emblazoned everywhere, when we read it in every page of our prayer-books, and when we hear it re-echoed in the history of every Saint?

There are men, Christians too, who will refuse to admit that any of this external activity of a believer's

faith is needful or profitable. They will tell you of private contemplation and of the worship of the heart. But we must speak plainly, and say, taking men as they are, and taking human history as it is, that man does *not* remember God unless he enters into the Christian ritual. And we cannot but suspect that those who decry that ritual are those who are content with far more scanty, far more fragmentary, worship of the Almighty Creator than Catholics have been taught to think His right.

Next, we require ritual in order to teach the mind. Christians are taught by the word of God, delivered to them by the pastors of the Church. It is this continuous and divinely-protected teaching, handed on from age to age, which constitutes Catholic tradition. To this teaching the child is brought as soon as it can understand, and to this the intelligence of mature age is prepared to submit as long as life shall last. But words are assisted by outward signs, acts and symbols. Thus, the outward reverence which is paid to the Holy Eucharistic Presence is a perpetual lesson in faith. The sanctuary, the tabernacle, the veil that hangs upon it, and the ever-burning lamp, speak to the heart in a way that every one of us can readily understand. The ritual of the Mass, and more especially the august and historical ceremonies of solemn Mass, express with unmistakable clearness who it is that descends upon the Christian altar, who it is that is offered, who it is that communicates Himself in that great act of worship.

The ritual of the Sacraments enforces the salutary doctrine of the grace of Christ. The Sacraments, it is true, are much more than mere rites or ceremonies: they truly and really convey grace. But the ceremonies which we use in conferring them are deeply instructive. In the imposition of hands we read the lesson that all our trust must be in the grace of our Redeemer, without which we can do nothing. In the water, the chrism, the bread, the wine, we see the various offices and effects of that all-necessary grace —how it purifies, illuminates, strengthens, and gives spiritual health. In the priestly robes we realise that it is not man who operates, but Christ the God-man, working by means of His minister. In the touching ritual of the Sacrament of Penance, we are conscious that the approach to the humble confession, and the ministerial absolution, bring home to the intelligence better than any words of doctor or of preacher that Christ is ever ready to pardon sin, and that sin before it is pardoned must be acknowledged, detested, and confessed. The various colours of the sacred vestments and ornaments, the images of holy persons, the symbols of holy things, tell the worshipper of the Christian seasons, the Christian mysteries and the Christian life; whilst the very structure of our churches, and the distinctive robes of bishop and priest and deacon, are eloquent of that hierarchical institution and that authority to teach and to rule which Christ has given for the good of the immortal souls for whom He died. Thus the Church's out-

ward presence, her garb, her gesture, her expression everywhere and constantly proclaim and enforce those points of the divine revelation and dispensation which it is chiefly essential that the Christian should be acquainted with.

And finally, ritual is intended to excite devotion. By "devotion" is not meant mere feeling, excitement of the sensibility, emotion or tears. These things may sometimes accompany devotion, but they are not devotion itself; and devotion may, and does, exist without any of them. Devotion is firmness or intensity of the heart towards God, and the fulfilling of His holy will. Its basis is not feeling, but the rational human will. Grounded upon the will's earnestness and steadfastness it rises to God in love, adoration, contrition, and good resolution. Devotion, thus understood, is helped and promoted by sacred ritual. For whatever reminds the soul of God, of Jesus, of His Blessed Mother and of His loving gifts, will naturally draw the heart to God. Whatever proclaims the wondrous solicitude of His infinite mercy will naturally intensify the heart's desire to love and serve God. If I am likely to be moved to praise God by a sermon, so also shall I be stirred by the silent eloquence of the things that pass before my eyes.

Then, it must be remembered that every rite, every ceremony, every outward expression of the Christian faith, every action of religious ministration, is an occasion for the devout elevation of the heart. This is a very important consideration. Without occasions

and opportunities, few would be really devout. A good many would say, if they were asked, that they were prepared to do God's will; but they would get no further; that is to say, they would never lift up their heart to God with any continuousness or any great warmth. In other words, it is not enough to have a vague and general intention of serving God, but it is a Christian duty to worship, love, ask, thank and implore pardon, with more or less frequency and earnestness. To provide occasions or opportunities for doing this is a grand and admirable function of our holy Catholic religion.

A man who follows the Mass, frequents the Sacraments, attends church and falls in with the outward life of the Church, cannot fail to be a man of devotion. He cannot fail to converse and commune with his God, by those acts of the heart which God justly expects from him. When he enters a church, he thinks whose house it is; when he beholds the tabernacle, he adores Jesus; when the priest enters, he thanks God for the priesthood of Christ. As the sacred ritual of the Mass goes on, he joins in every part and follows every point. When he approaches Holy Communion or confession, every action suggests a prayer or act of the heart; and whether in the church or at home, by the crucifix, by the rosary, by the use of the blessed water, by holy medals and scapulars, by the sound of the bell, by holy pictures, by each of the numerous practices and objects which are sanctioned by Catholic authority, he finds himself reminded and

assisted to offer to his Creator the incense of prayer or the holocaust of love.

But it is chiefly when before the altar that his powers are moved and lifted up to heavenly energy. There, amid the impressive silence, or when the sweet and devotional chant deepens recollection, when the symbolic tapers glow and the mystic incense floats upward, there can hardly be a soul possessed of faith which does not find it easier to give itself up to God. If the heart feels, if the soul melts, if the tears flow —who shall reprove or blame? These things are not "devotion," but they may result from it, and they often foster and prolong it. And if, here and there, we find a disposition and a temperament which can love and serve God more effectively without external prompting or opportunity, yet still human nature will remain human nature, and He who became Man that He might the more easily and completely draw our affections to Himself, will allow, and approve, that the multitude should use human feeling and emotion to nourish heavenly hope and love.

Such are the principles which lie at the root of Catholic ritual. It is needless to say that rites and ceremonies must be carefully watched by Church authority. Ritual is capable of being both foolish and misleading; it may minister to superstition on the one hand, and to misbelief on the other. It must always rest on doctrine; it must always be suited to the needs and the opportunities of the hour. Hence it varies and alters from age to age; it is

sometimes suppressed altogether when the Church is persecuted; it is often curtailed when means fail; and it is at other times gloriously amplified when faith holds her rightful place. Without a governing authority ritual must lose its opportuneness, as doctrine must lose its distinctness. Without an authority, it must be by turns redundant and defective, sometimes a mask without a face, at others a needless challenge and defiance. For us who believe and obey, there is peace and joy in the thought that we are as the flocks of the Psalmist who are led into the places where the pastures are, and guided by the rod and the staff of the Good Shepherd.[1] Therefore should we welcome instruction, study the Church's open book, love her festivals, and attune our hearts to enter into her divine and salutary life.

[1] Psalm xxii.

XXVI

CHURCH MUSIC

God's worship—The Christian Sacrifice—The music of the Mass must be no common music, and its performers specially set apart—Plain Chant ; cannot be appreciated without study and intelligence ; nor apart from the words —Its practice—In default of Plain Chant, Church music must at least conform to certain rules.

It is not on a matter of faith, or of essential Christian morality, that we propose to address you in this Lenten Pastoral; but on a subject which, nevertheless, has its importance, and on which most of us have our opinions, our feelings, and our tastes ; that is to say, on Church Music. It will be very useful to recall certain principles of piety, certain traditions of Divine worship, and to indicate to some extent how these should be observed and carried out.

First, then, dear children in Jesus Christ, let us recall to mind that there can be nothing greater, nothing nobler, among the external and visible occupations of man upon this earth, than the worship of Almighty God. We read, in the Apocalypse of St. John, how He is worshipped in the heavens where His Glory dwelleth ; how the angels and the saints throng around the everlasting Throne, spending every power, and consuming their glorious being, in adoration, thanksgiving, and praise

for evermore. These glowing descriptions of the Apostolic Seer can be verified only spiritually of the citizens of heaven. But they were written for the instruction of mortal men. The spirit of man, immortal as it is, dwells in a body, acts through bodily organs, and depends in a thousand ways on the external life lived in common with other men; and it is for man to follow afar off the example of the blessed, and to translate the ritual of the heavens into the language of this earth of ours. The most Holy Trinity claims, first indeed our spirit's adoration, and our heart's love; but it also claims that constant outward, visible, public homage, which not only is the debt and duty of a corporeal being, but also lifts up, carries on and intensifies the acts of the spirit itself.

The Christian upon earth, bound as he is to adore and praise his heavenly Father, possesses a means, a ritual act, a solemn ceremony of most profound significance and efficacy, instituted by Jesus Christ, for the grand purpose of at once offering to God the earth's profoundest homage, and of bringing down upon men the fulness of the grace and mercy of God. This, we need not tell you, is the great Eucharistic Sacrifice, commonly called the Mass. The sanctity and power of the Mass are derived from the fact that it is the perpetually renewed sacrifice of Jesus Christ Himself. This being so, the whole Christian universe is necessarily drawn around the Eucharistic altar. Day by day, all the world over, that great act

takes place. The priesthood perform it, the people recognise in it the grand means of grace; the devout never miss it, the grateful love to join in it, the God-fearing cling to it, the repentant trust in it; the poor claim it as theirs, the rich come there to kneel beside the poor; whilst the laws of Christian countries bow to it, politics and commerce pause to acknowledge it, armies salute it, and kings bring their trains and their riches to the sanctuaries of its celebration. The Mass is the great act of worship, thanksgiving, and praise which unites, or should unite, all Christian men in public, solemn, and perpetual homage to the God of heaven and earth—Who hath made us by His power, redeemed us by His Blood, sanctified us by His grace, and destined us to His eternal glory.

The celebration of the Holy Eucharist, or the Mass, which from apostolic times downwards has always been the chief and central religious act of the Christian Church, has ever been accompanied by venerable forms of prayer and august ceremonial. These prayers and ceremonies, surrounding the Eucharistic consecration and communion, have varied to some extent in their details in different centuries and different localities. But the order of the Mass, speaking generally, has always been as follows: first, psalms and confession as a preparation; next, the reading of Scripture and of the holy gospels; thirdly, the offering of the elements of bread and wine; fourthly, the solemn prayers of Eucharistic worship

—the Sanctus and the Canon of the Mass ; containing the Consecration prayers, whereby the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ ; fifthly, the Lord's Prayer ; and sixthly, the breaking of the Host and the Communion. This is what is called the liturgy. Other religious acts, such as vespers, certain "blessings" and processions, and all ceremonies which relate to the Blessed Sacrament, such as Benediction, are included in the word liturgy ; but chiefly and by excellence the liturgy means the Mass.

You will at once perceive, dear children in Jesus Christ, why we have thus dwelt upon the duty of worship and upon the Christian liturgy. A certain part of that liturgy is associated with *Music.* Other arts besides music have been called upon to enhance the piety and solemnity of the liturgical office—architecture, painting, sculpture, the craft of the loom and of the worker in silver and gold. But Music has her place very near the altar ; for it is music which is the setting and the adornment of some of the most beautiful and solemn prayers which precede or accompany the great act of sacrifice. No sooner do the sacred ministers of the High Mass approach the foot of the altar than the chant is heard of the *Introit* — that adaptation of the psalms of David which ushers in the sacred function. Close upon this follow the strains of the *Kyrie eleison*—that Litany, as the ancient writers call it, which expresses the cry for mercy of a contrite heart. Next comes

the *Gloria in excelsis*—the hymn of the angels—the "great doxology," as it used to be called, which praises God for the Incarnation and the holy Name of Jesus. Between the chant of the epistle by the sub-deacon and that of the gospel by the deacon, there comes a strain of psalm and antiphon, with the repetition of the mystic "Alleluia," or with the long-drawn Tract—like the chorus of an old Greek tragedy, commenting in lyric phrase upon the mystery or festival of the day. The holy gospel is followed by the chant of the *Credo*—that Creed of the two great Councils of the Church which defined the Trinity and the Incarnation. The Offertory versicle accompanies the offering of the bread and wine. The thrice-repeated *Sanctus* marks the beginning of the most solemn part of the Mass. The *Agnus Dei* prepares all hearts for the Holy Communion. And finally, during the Communion of the people is sung the verse which always so touchingly embodies a devout thought drawn from the day's office.

What, beloved brethren, is the first reflection that rises in the mind when we thus consider the connection of music with the great Christian liturgy? Surely this—that the music of that august rite must be no common music, but music that is appropriated, sanctified, and completely dominated by the liturgy itself. If we are to worship by or with music, music must be worthy of the act of worship. If the Mass admits music, the Mass must have music of its own—music dedicated to it, made for it, fashioned

to honour and enhance it—just as royalty has its proper robes, or as a devoted artist carves a precious casket to hold and guard the charter of his city's freedom. Music, like other arts, is not essentially religious. She may minister to many moods of humanity, throughout the whole scale of human passion and feeling, obedient alike to him who lifts her high and to him who dishonours her in the dust. But surely, if it be possible—if the skill and devotion of Christian hearts can accomplish it—there must be a difference set up and established between the music of the Eucharistic liturgy—the music of the sacrifice—the music of the Blessed Sacrament—and all other strains, modes, uses, and fashions of music whatsoever. It would be a less evil that she should sacrifice some of her sweetness and her power, than that she should be the means of dragging adoration down to the world's prose, or the flesh's baseness, or the devil's art of diversion. It would be better to silence her for ever in the sanctuary than bring in over the Church's threshold an atmosphere of unworthy passion, or mundane frivolity, or even of mere human and heathen art, unhallowed by the Blood of the redemption. If we cannot keep her wholly for the Mass, and the Mass alone, then we must set apart and keep some phase, some fashion of her noble science, and use no other—just as the sacrificial robes differ from the garments of daily life, and the chalice of the altar from the cups and the drinking-vessels of the common world.

Our desires would go further than this. For the service of the ancient Temple of Sion, which has passed away, God inspired King David to set apart the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Idithun to "prophesy with harps and with psalteries and with cymbals" (1 Paralip. xxv. 1). Yes, to prophesy. For the words of the Divine liturgy are always words of prophecy—of sure and certain augury, of promises daily fulfilled and to be fulfilled through all generations. Who, then, shall be entrusted with the ministry of music and song in the temples of the new and more ample Covenant? Shall they not be set apart from other men? Should they not be holy and zealous, joining goodness to skill, and uniting true religious feeling with the exercise of their sweet and noble art? For they sing in the "sight of the angels" (Psalm cxxxvii. 1)—and, were it permitted, the angelic hosts themselves would throng from the heavens to bring their golden harps and their everlasting song to the service of the Christian altar.

You are aware that there is a certain description of vocal music which the Church has adopted and calls her own. It is termed the Plain Chant, or the ecclesiastical chant—also the Gregorian Chant, from the name of the great Pope, St. Gregory, who set it in order and enriched it, at the very beginning of the seventh century. All those portions of the holy liturgy which are to be sung have been set to Gregorian Chant. It is the Church's own song. She preserves and watches over it from age to age;

and the Council of Trent ordains that every Church student in the seminaries shall be taught to understand and use it. It is a kind of chant of which many of our people know nothing, and which many of those who are to some extent acquainted with it too frequently profess to depreciate and dislike.

But let it be remembered that the Gregorian Chant, in order to be appreciated, requires study, use, and intelligence. The same may be said of every species of music and of every school. There are, it is true, simple and taking melodies, and bursts of choral harmony, which even the uneducated ear can catch and enjoy. But the human faculties are capable of more than this. All emotions which depend upon the senses alone are necessarily short-lived. A tune, if it be a tune and nothing more, quickly becomes common and stale. The reason is, that it does not touch or stir those powers of man which lie below the surface, and which, though not so quickly affected as the senses, are nevertheless far more deep-seated, far more tenacious, and far more truly of the essence of human nature. Music, to a human being, is a very poor emotional excitement, unless it is a vehicle for something higher than tune and harmony. It must express mind, and must be addressed to mind. Even the greatest of instrumental symphonies derive their permanent power of delighting partly from study, comparison, and association, and even more from a knowledge or an assumption of the ideas or the story which the composer desires to express or relate.

By association, comparison, reflection, and intelligence —above all, therefore, by its conjunction with noble and touching *words*—music can be made to reach, not only the ears and the feelings, but the heart, the imagination, the reason, and the spiritual soul. In order, then, to produce its deepest and most spiritual effects, music must first of all be of such strong texture and worthy idea as to be removed from that obviousness which speedily passes into staleness; and secondly, it must be associated with words. When we speak of Gregorian Chant—or indeed of any good and real church music—we do not speak of music merely as such, but of music which can only open upon the mind by study, and which is associated with words the holiest and the most sublime.

Is it not true that the very strangeness and inaccessibility of the Gregorian Chant render it all the more suitable for the liturgy? It is music of an age gone by—as the vestures of the sacrificing priest are survivals of past centuries. There is history in every phrase of it. Its progressions, its rises and falls, its intonations and its endings, are not heard in the modern world—not heard in the theatre, or the concert-room, or the street. He who would use it must seek it apart, where the steps of men do not tread—as if he sought some old-fashioned flower, neglected and rare, to put upon the steps of the altar. When he comes to be familiar with it, he finds that it is a true art; that it has form, symmetry, variety, and beauty. He comes to love the turns of its stately

melody, to recognise its sequences, at first so strange, and to rest in its unhackneyed closes—to rest as the Christian heart should rest, with the consciousness that the end is not yet, and that the final close of all can only be sung in eternity. Every feast, every mystery, connected with the holy liturgy grows to be associated with its proper and well-recognised musical phrase. The Introits of the greater festivals come like a triumphant invitation to the marriage feast of the Lamb. The Gradual breaks into praise of the saints, as if a banner were unfurled when lords and warriors pass by. The proper chant of the *Pange Lingua* brings back at every Benediction the memories of Corpus Christi. The two tones of the Lenten "Tract" are full of the sweet devotion of the Cross. Christmas antiphons, Easter alleluias, Whitsun hymns, Our Lady's vespers, St. Peter's Mass, the turns of the chant for all the seasons and the saints' days—these, to one who loves and studies the music of the Church, are every one full of edification, of pious memories, and of devout suggestion, such as can never be afforded by any music save that which is in a special way the Church's own.

But in order that the Church's chant may effectively lift their hearts, the Church's children must be able to follow the words which give it form and soul. No one can understand what that chant is unless he can, at least in some degree, follow the liturgical words. Is it not worth while for all of us to try to read them, at least in a translation, and so to understand what is sung?

These words are the noblest words of all language —words of ancient prophet and psalmist, words of doctor and pontiff, words of angels and apostles, words of the Son of God. They are words of adoration, praise, thanksgiving, sorrow, and petition ; words of rejoicing, words of wailing, words of faith and of Divine love. It is the chanting of these words, in their times and seasons and hour, that quickens the prayer of those who daily sing the Divine Office. It is these words, lifted up on the rise and the swell of the melody, which bring thoughts of eternity, the feeling of the mercy of God, pictures of Nazareth and of Calvary, the fragrance of Our Lady's royalty, and memories of the heroic love of the saints of old. Thus the chant of the Church is the handmaid of devotion, shutting out distraction like the walls of the sanctuary, and drawing the thoughts and the emotions to the altar and the Blessed Sacrament.

In countries like our own, and especially in a diocese like this, where the clergy are few and the churches poor, it is not possible to give that attention to the Gregorian Chant without which its proper execution is impossible. Here and there, it is true, it can assume its proper place—as in our Cathedral of St. Michael, where the Canons and community chant the daily Office, and where the Plain Song of the Church accompanies the sacred liturgy with a perfection of execution and a devotional effect to which all who have heard it can testify. In a few places, also, unison choirs, or children, have been taught to sing

with accuracy and piety some of the less difficult portions of the music of the Mass; and a few choirs sing the vesper-antiphons, or the services of Holy Week.

Without pains and practice the Gregorian Chant is out of the question. But it would be well that the clergy and the choirs of churches should have their attention drawn to it. It is coming back. This generation, thanks to the efforts of skilled and devout musicians, is beginning to understand and appreciate the Church's idea in clinging to it. It is now seen that church music ought to be music of a distinct and peculiar kind. In proportion as the matter is looked into, it becomes clear that what church music has to do is to carry the sacred words of the liturgy; as the oxen in the Book of Kings carried the Ark of the Covenant—white, majestic, slow, and peaceful. Better, more elaborate, more brilliant, more taking music may perhaps be easily had; but not music that will be equally worthy of its sacred burden of adoration and prayer.

In the absence, however, of adequate means of learning or executing the Church's own chant, it is still necessary, as it has been all along, to consider the question of using other kinds of music in the sacred liturgy. It is perfectly true that the Church admits and allows, even in the Mass, music which is not Gregorian Chant. But not every kind of music is permitted in church, whether at Mass or at other times. On this point, for the guidance of all, both

priests and choirs, we would appeal to the principles already laid down in this Letter, and we take this opportunity of giving one or two brief rules, grounded on those principles, and confirmed by authority greater than our own.

1. The first rule is taken word for word from the Ordinance published by Pope Leo XIII. two and a half years ago:[1] "In order to move the faithful to devotion and to be worthy of the house of God, all musical compositions used in church should be impregnated with the spirit of the sacred service at which they are used, and should religiously correspond with the meaning of the ritual and of the words." This needs no commentary. But let us place side by side with it the admonitions set down by the great St. Bernard, seven hundred years ago. "Let the chant," says the great doctor, "be full of gravity; let it be neither worldly nor too rude and poor. . . Let it be sweet, yet without levity, and whilst it pleases the ear let it move the heart. It should alleviate sadness, and calm the angry spirit. It should not contradict the sense of the words, but rather enhance it. For it is no slight loss of spiritual grace to be distracted from the profit of the sense by the levity of the chant; and to have our attention drawn to a mere vocal display when we ought to be thinking of what is sung" (St. Bernard, *Epistle* ccccxviii).

[1] *Regolamento per la Musica Sacra*, July 6, 1894; translated in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* for 1894, p. 858.

2. Whatever is to be sung in the church should be approved by the priest, and not merely selected by the choir. For it is necessary that church music should not only be good music, but that it should be suitable music, and music which respects the sacred words; that it should not be too long; that there should not be too much repetition in it; and that there should not be long solos, or too many of them. (It is forbidden to have solos at Benediction and whenever the Blessed Sacrament is on the altar.)

3. The greatest care must be taken to exclude from the church all music, vocal or instrumental, which is worldly and profane; most especially music which carries with it any association with the theatre.

4. Those who are privileged to sing in our churches should remember that they are, in a certain sense, ministers of the altar; for they perform an office which, in the early ages, was discharged by ordained ministers. This is true most particularly of the Holy Sacrifice; here they accompany, support, and answer the priest, who, in his official garments, offers in the name of Christ Jesus the Sacrifice of the New Covenant. A singer, therefore, in the Catholic Church, should be a devout Catholic, earnest and careful in behaviour, striving to understand what is sung, and ready to take such pains in learning and preparation that the laws of the Church may be obeyed, full justice done to the music, and the faithful edified and drawn to God. Singing should

never be made an occasion for gratifying vanity or displaying vocal resources. All music which tends to bring some particular performer into prominent notice is better avoided. St. Bernard, speaking of certain singers of his day, said, "they sing to please the people rather than God."

It is not necessary at this moment, dear children in Jesus Christ, to say more. May God grant that these words may enkindle in the hearts of those who sing in our choirs—and who often show great zeal and marked ability—that religious feeling, that devotion and that modesty, without which the chant of the sanctuary is too apt to cause scandal to the faithful and suffering to good Catholics, and sometimes to furnish an occasion of scorn to those not of the fold. If the ideas and principles insisted upon by the Church herself, as briefly and imperfectly expressed in this Letter, be dutifully laid to heart by the clergy and the intelligent laity, it will be possible, in God's good time, to carry out such a reorganisation of our Church music as may make it what it ought to be—not a tawdry imitation of the music of the outside world, but an art of its own, inspired by the sacred liturgy, and conforming in all things to the "pattern shown upon the mountain."

XXVII

CATHOLIC CHILDREN AT NON-CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

(A Letter to the Clergy.)

Mixed Education cannot be approved by a Catholic ; words of Pope Pius IX., of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, and of Leo XIII. ; of the Synods of Westminster—Hence attendance at a non-Catholic School constitutes a grave and proximate danger—The application of these principles belongs to the ecclesiastical authority—The Universities — Non-Catholic Higher Schools — Elementary Schools.

Rev. and dear Father,—I am desirous of calling your serious attention to the subject of the attendance of the children of the flock at non-Catholic Schools.

Where there is a Catholic Elementary School—as there is in the large majority of our Missions—I do not know that we have to complain of any great tendency on the part of parents to send their children to any other elementary school. Doubtless there will always be a small proportion of parents who, for the sake of fancied advantages, or through indifference, or on account of feeling against the priest or the teachers, will risk their children's religion in this way. But there are not a few of our Missions

and small stations where no Catholic School is possible. Then, again, there has come into prominence during the last few years a comparatively new feature in the condition of Catholic education in these districts—and that is, the increasing number of our children who are beginning to attend non-Catholic Schools of a superior sort, such as Grammar Schools, Intermediate Schools, and Higher Grade Schools. I am much concerned about the religious training of this last-mentioned class, and it is chiefly on their account that I now address you.

Let me first remind you of the teaching of the Catholic Church on the subject of what is called Mixed Education.

A non-Catholic School may be either a school in which some distinctive religious teaching is given, or one which professes to teach merely secular knowledge. It is not necessary, in what follows, to make any distinction between these schools, which could only be classified by a sort of graduated scale, in which the High Anglican School would be at one end and the rigidly secular Board School at the other. They all agree in two things—first, Catholic teaching is excluded ; and secondly, some kind of false religious influence is always present in a more or less active form.

Now, a system of education for the young in which the Catholic faith and the direction of the Church are excluded, cannot be approved by any Catholic. This you should sedulously teach your flock. For there

have been Catholics who have maintained this very view. They have argued that education in secular matters is best given by secular teachers under conditions entirely apart from religion, and that catechism, prayer, devotion, and sacramental teaching should be dealt with at a different time, in a different place, and under different teachers. This view is condemned by the Church. She rightly considers that it is vital to a child's Catholicism and its Christianity that the spirit of religion should animate every part of the scholar's task, and influence every hour of his time at school. The teachers should be good Catholics, religion should have its predominant place, and religious truth should be the guide, in all those branches of instruction which are not merely arithmetical or technical. Hence the condemnation in the Syllabus of those who assert that "a Catholic *may approve* of a system of education for the young which is divorced from the Catholic faith and from the power of the Church — which entirely confines itself to secular matters and to things affecting temporal and social life, or which is primarily concerned with these things."[1]

The well-known letter of Pope Pius IX. to the Archbishop of Friburg, which preceded the Syllabus, dwells in strong terms on the principle laid down in the proposition just cited. We are told that this

[1] Catholicis viris probari potest ea juventutis instituendi ratio quae sit a Catholicâ fi le et ab Ecclesiae potestate sejuncta, quaeque rerum duntaxat naturalium scientiam ae terrenae socialis vitae fines tantummodo vel saltem primario spectat.—*Prop.* 48.

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system of education is a source of *grievous harm* to society; that it is a *most pernicious* system, especially if adopted in elementary schools ; that the young are thereby exposed to the *greatest danger;* that in the face of such a system the Church should, and she will, *spare no pains* to provide Christian education, and will find herself compelled to warn the faithful that such schools *cannot in conscience be attended*.[1]

The words which I have italicised, and which can be read in the original language below, should be carefully noted, as they contain a theological teaching to which I shall presently advert. They are repeated, with slight variation, in numerous Instructions of the Holy See. For example, in a Rescript of Propaganda on the Schismatical and Protestant Schools in the East, Bishops and others are told that they are *bound to use all possible care* in making parents understand that the *greatest evil* they can inflict upon their offspring, upon their country, and upon holy religion is to expose their children to *so manifest a danger*.[2]

There is also a very full and plain Instruction from the same Sacred Congregation addressed to the Bishops of the United States. They are told that the Letter to the Archbishop of Friburg lays down, on the subject of non-Catholic Schools, a law that is

[1] Gravissimis repleatur et vexetur damnis. . . . Perniciosissima docendi ratio. . . . Juventus maximis exponitur periculis. . . . Intentissimo studio omnia conari nullisque curis unquam parcere. . . . Cogeretur omnes fideles monere eisque declarare ejusmodi scholas Catholicae ecclesiae adversas hand posse in conscientiâ frequentari.—*Ep. ad Archiep. Friburg*, 14 Julii 1864.

[2] April 25, 1868.

divine and *of universal application* wherever the system there condemned is to be found in existence. Thus it is everywhere a dictate of the natural and divine law that, unless the danger can be made "remote," whereas it is in itself proximate, such schools cannot be attended without sin. The Letter concludes by pronouncing that parents who, without sufficient cause, and without adopting the requisite safeguards, send their children to schools of this kind, must, by the teachings of Moral Theology, be denied absolution if they refuse to amend.[1]

Ten years after the date of this Instruction, Pope Leo XIII. addressed the Bishops of England on the same subject. The Letter impresses upon the Bishops that there is hardly anything more essential at the present time than that education in literature should be accompanied by the inculcation of true doctrine in faith and morals. It refers to the "pernicious error," so often condemned, and goes on to infer "with how great solicitude heads of families should avoid sending their children to those schools in which they cannot be taught the precepts of reli-

[1] Ea (juventutis instituendi ratio) S. Congregationi visa est etiam ex se periculi plena, ac perquam adversa rei Catholicae. . . . Hoc autem periculum perversionis, nisi a proximo remotum fiat, tales scholae tutâ conscientiâ frequentari nequeunt. Id vel ipsa clamat lex naturalis et divina. . . . Haec (verba Pii PP. IX.), utpote fundata jure naturali ac divinâ, generale quoddam enuntiant principium, vimque universalem habent, et ad eas omnes pertinent regiones, ubi perniciosissima hujusmodi juventutis instituendi ratio infeliciter invecta fuerit. . . . Eos si contumaces fuerint absolvi non posse in sacramento paenitentiae ex doctrinâ morali Catholicâ manifestum est.—*S.C. de Propaganda*, 24 Novembris 1875.

gion." The Holy Father then mentions in terms of praise the "free," or non-Government, schools of France, Belgium, America, and the British Colonies, and expresses his own determination to provide such schools in Rome.

I may here also cite the Encyclical of the same Pope, *Nobilissima*, of the 8th of February 1884, in which, after using words of reprobation similar to those already noticed, the Holy Father continues: "The Church has over and over again loudly condemned those schools which are called Mixed or Neutral, warning parents to be careful in a thing so momentous."

These pronouncements of the Holy See are the law for all. Our own Provincial Synods have, for the most part, contented themselves with circulating and referring to them. See, for example, the 4th Synod, Decr. xvii. But the very first of our Synods, held in 1852, threatened the "anger of God" to parents who sent their children to non-Catholic schools (Decr. viii., 2). It is worth while, also, to point out, briefly, the instructions and exhortations contained in the Synodical Pastorals. In the First, the provision of poor schools and of middle schools is strongly enforced. The Third speaks very strongly on the necessity of inducing parents to send their children to Catholic Schools. It insists that the pulpit, the confessional, the domestic visit, the tract, and casual conversation, should all be brought to bear on "this most grave and ruinous indifference."

It urges that the topic should never be omitted at missions and retreats, and that it should be considered a matter on which conscience should be examined and amendment promised. The Fourth says: "We cannot accept modern schemes of Mixed Education, or conform ourselves to them by the slightest deviation from the traditions of the Catholic Faith." And in an Instruction on Pupil Teachers, issued by the English Bishops in 1875, it is laid down at the very beginning that "Education apart from religion is condemned by the Holy See."

We have, then, in these Instructions of the supreme authority, all of which are of recent date, and have been promulgated and enforced by the Bishops of this Province, the statement of a theological doctrine, which it would be erroneous, scandalous, and even savouring of heresy, to contradict. It is, that to attend a non-Catholic School constitutes a grave and proximate danger to faith, and that, therefore, it is a grave sin for any parent to send his child to such a school, except when there is no other suitable school, and unless such precautions are taken as to make the danger remote. This doctrine every priest with care of souls is bound to teach to his flock.

In applying this teaching to practical life, I do not deny that there are difficulties. To speak first of elementary schools; we often meet with parents who object to send their children to the Catholic School on account of certain features which they dislike, or who

prefer non-Catholic Schools on account of certain advantages. They claim that, if they take due precaution to have their children properly instructed and brought up in piety, they cannot justly be interfered with. But such a claim cannot be admitted. This is a religious question; and it is, therefore, within the sphere of Church authority. In such questions it belongs to the Church not only to pronounce on the principle involved, but also on its application to particular cases and individual Catholics. It is the office of the pastor, therefore, and, in a further resort, of the Bishop, to judge both of the alleged necessity, and of the sufficiency of the precautions. I am by no means intending to deny that there may sometimes be reasonable grounds for a parent's objection to the Catholic School, or his wish to send his child to a non-Catholic one. A prudent priest will weigh the matter, and will refer to the Bishop before refusing the Sacraments. But the flock should be carefully instructed, as occasion may arise, that the matter lies within the jurisdiction of the spiritual power, and that it is far from the true Catholic spirit to decide such grave questions for oneself.

Moreover, there is another aspect of this subject which shows still more clearly how necessary it is to abide by the judgment of the Church. It is almost impossible for a Catholic parent to send his child to a non-Catholic School anywhere in this country where there is a Catholic one, without causing

scandal. That is to say, such action suggests to other Catholic parents to do the same; it weakens the position of the Catholic School; it has the appearance of religious indifference; and it tends to break down the strictness and firmness of Catholic faith. It is therefore, nearly always, a very grave scandal, especially when the parent in question is a person of some standing or influence. Now, an action which involves scandal of this kind can only be justified by a very grave necessity. It is the duty of the parent, therefore, to take the judgment of the Church both upon the possible extent of the scandal and on the reasons for risking it.

If our people are carefully and continuously instructed in the principles here laid down—that the frequentation of non-Catholic Schools is a grave danger to faith, and that they must not rely solely on their own judgment when considering whether in any particular case such a thing can be allowed—there would probably be few cases of absolute rebellion. It is for the clergy to meet all parents who manifest a disposition to desert their own schools with all reasonable consideration and paternal kindness, giving due weight to what they have to say, and endeavouring to guide them to do what is right.

These same principles precisely apply to secondary and higher Schools, and to the Universities themselves. But here, in applying them, we are at once confronted by the fact that we have no Catholic Universities, and, in this diocese, no higher schools

for boys. Under these circumstances, what are we to do?

As regards the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, you are aware that the Holy See allows our young Catholics to frequent them. But the circumstances under which this permission has been given are extremely instructive. As long as there was any chance of the establishment in this country of a Catholic University the permission was withheld. Over and over again the attempt was made to induce the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda to change its attitude; but all that was obtained was that each Bishop should have the power to decide on applications made by persons in his own jurisdiction; whilst the Sacred Congregation repeated in numerous Letters the teaching I have already adverted to, that to attend non-Catholic places of education constitutes a grave and proximate danger to faith. When, however, it became evident that no Catholic University could be established in England, and when, at the same time, well-informed and responsible persons thought that the dangers to which Catholic young men would be exposed at Oxford and Cambridge were less serious than they had been a generation back, the permission to reside was reluctantly granted. But the Holy See was still constant to Catholic principle. The danger of perversion and of falling into indifference and into vice was to be counteracted, as far as possible. Those who went to the Universities were to be strong in character, well grounded in

their religion, and carefully looked after; and the Bishops were enjoined to provide for them special Catholic Conferences on religion, history, and philosophy, during the time of their residence; whilst all such other precautions as the Divine Law (apart from any human precept) prescribes in such cases were left to the individual conscience of the student and of his parents or guardians.

It is not difficult to gather from the method of proceeding just described what ought to be our rule of action in dealing with the case of those children and young people in the diocese who may be necessitated to attend non-Catholic Grammar Schools, Intermediate Schools, or Higher Grade Schools. To make it lawful for them to do so, there must be three conditions: First, they must not join in any non-Catholic acts of worship, or attend any religious or Bible instruction other than their own; secondly, they must be carefully taught their catechism and their religion by some one; and, thirdly, they must be prepared for the Sacraments and brought up to frequent them. These conditions must be impressed upon parents by the pastor on all convenient occasions. He must let parents clearly understand that it is they who are responsible for their children's faith and virtue. It were better for a parent that he had a mill-stone tied to his neck and he were drowned in the depths of the sea, than that his child, by his fault or his neglect, should lose his faith, fall into religious indifference, or lapse into immorality.

But it is useless to conceal from ourselves that the greater part of the labour required for the safeguarding of these children will have to be borne by the clergy of each Mission. We may exhort parents and friends, but there will always be numbers, of boys especially, who are sure to be lost to the faith unless the priest exerts himself. What steps, therefore, ought a priest to take in order to fulfil his responsibilities in this most serious matter?

The first duty, no doubt, is to be accurately informed. In a large Mission it not unfrequently happens that boys and girls are going to these schools without the knowledge of the priest. It must be an obligation, therefore, on each incumbent, assisted by priests in charge of separate districts, to make, at least once a year, and that in the month of December, a complete list of all boys and girls attending such higher schools as are here referred to, with the names and addresses of their respective parents. A transcript of this list will be called for by the Bishop each January.

Next, each priest should consider it his duty to teach the catechism personally to all the boys in his parish, up to the age of fourteen, who are not attending his elementary school. I do not, for the moment, speak of the girls, because it commonly happens that they are taught by religious sisters, or by their mothers; but it must be remembered that the priest's oversight and direction are owing to them as well as to the boys. But the boys will most

certainly run the greatest risk of not being taught their religion at all unless the priest teaches them. And it must be observed that it is not enough to get them to attend the Sunday School. The Sunday School is not chiefly intended for tuition in the catechism or in sacred history, but is rather an occasion on which to review the religious acquisition of the past week, to bring catechism into connection with piety, and to excite in the breasts of children thoughts which go beyond the letter of any formulary. The priest must, therefore, arrange for these boys to attend, at his house, or elsewhere, *at least once a week for an hour's lesson.* This lesson should have been committed to memory at home; and it will be the priest's duty to hear the children repeat it, to explain it, and to impress it upon their intelligences and hearts by suitable words.

I trust that this diocesan regulation, which is henceforward to be in force, of an hour's religious instruction for all boys not attending the elementary school, will be well supported by the parents. A difficulty will no doubt arise in fixing the time for the lesson. Localities differ so much that it must be left to the priest to choose a time and place which will be the most suitable under all circumstances. In some missions there might be more than one hour appointed, to accommodate different localities, and in those missions where there are only one or two boys, the priest might, with great advantage, instruct them singly. But parents must be exhorted not to shrink

from a little inconvenience in such a vital matter. Negligence in enforcing the attendance of their children at such instructions might easily pass into a mortal sin—and confessors should not lose sight of this.

In addition to this weekly lesson, the boys should be urged to attend the Sunday School. They should be prepared for their first confession with great care, and the occasion of their first Communion should be marked by more careful instruction, and by such solemnity as may impress their hearts and strengthen their piety. They should also be brought into the sanctuary, and taught to serve at the altar with devotion and delight.

It remains to say a word about the children who are attending non-Catholic Elementary Schools, there being no Catholic School within their reach. Here, again, it is a positive and grave obligation on parents and on pastors to adopt due means to teach the children their religion and to prevent them from losing the faith and growing up without Catholic feeling and Catholic piety. There would seem to be no reason why the priest should not expect them to attend at a catechism class once, or twice, a week, as already prescribed for the boys going to secondary schools. I know of two missions where the priest, with fair success, tries to get the children to attend at the church for a short half-hour on their way to school every morning. In most instances, the authorities of the non-Catholic school would allow the priest, if he thought the plan feasible, to use a room in the

school after school hours. In the smallest missions, the priest can well instruct the children of each family separately, and I expect that he will visit the homes for this purpose.

To all priests who are anxious to exercise that zeal for souls, which, I am sure, they often pray for, I recommend the strenuous consideration of the whole subject of the teaching of our holy religion to children. Let all give it their thought and their attention, planning methods, and organising means. The Catholic religion, unlike that of the sects round about us, must be taught, or it disappears. We have an uphill task to perform, and unless we labour without intermission, the stones roll down to the bottom. It is in the skilful and unwearied teaching of Catholicism, and the impressing the children of the flock with Catholic piety, that lies in a great measure our hope for the future.

XXVIII

OUR RESPONSIBILITY OF INTEMPERANCE

The drink-temptation largely of a man's own making, but closely affected by social conditions; the public-house; insufficient food and shelter—Drink among the well-to-do —The sad effects of drink upon our people—To mitigate the evil, all must avoid occasions; decent habitation must be provided for the poor, prayer and the Holy Sacraments must be made use of, and abstinence practised.

The sin, the evil and the misery, caused everywhere in this country by intoxicating drink, are so great, that it is the duty of all to exert themselves and to make sacrifices in order that the temptations may be diminished, and the weak and tempted may be helped and saved.

There are many demons that walk this earth and do their worst to slay the immortal souls of men. There is Pride—which so corrupts the soul made by God for Himself, that man worships himself in the place of God, and will neither recognise God's presence, hear God's voice, nor bend to God's most holy law. There is Impurity—which seeks contentment in the base pleasures of lower nature, and which, like some monster with a hundred-fold power of grip, paralyses the spiritual forces and stifles every divine aspiration. There is Sloth or Spiritual Indifference

—an evil spirit made up of ignorance and sullenness, which persuades men to sleep a fatal sleep, which makes the world pleasant, and religion hard and disagreeable. There is Hatred, there is Dishonesty, there is the Love of Money. All these have to be fought, or we shall perish; and this ceaseless fight gives our human life its seriousness and its peril.

But the drink-temptation differs in many ways from all the other evil influences which threaten to drag humanity down to hell. In the first place, it is far less a part of our own corrupt nature. The inclination to drink to excess is by no means so inborn in us as pride, luxury, or laziness. There are wide regions of the earth where men are hardly tempted to intoxication. It is chiefly in the colder countries of the world that nature, being more subject to physical influences which benumb and repress vitality, seems to crave for a stimulant: and even in those climates such a craving is far from being universal.

Again, the drink-temptation is, far more commonly than other inclinations, traceable to the bodily constitution, either as inherited from parents or as perverted and corrupted by wilful excess. Thus there are those who are born with a strong inclination to intoxication. It is not true to say, as so-called scientific men often do say, that such a craving is sometimes so violent as to deprive a man of the power of resistance. In particular cases it is no doubt true that passion or bodily emotion of any kind may submerge the reason and the rational will. But

this is not true of any man's life as a whole. Moreover, our natural inclinations, however violent, can be met and circumvented—by avoiding occasions, by keeping away from temptation, and by taking such prudent and constant precautions as reason and religion would suggest in a matter so serious. As to those who have fallen into bad habits for which they are themselves to blame, they ought to know that habits are no excuse for sins if those habits are allowed to flourish unchecked. When a man has given himself a strong bias in the broad road that leads to destruction, it must be his life-long work to resist that bias, and to restore his nature to its balance ; or sin will accumulate on his path to the grave.

But if the drink-temptation is, to a large extent, of men's own making, and thus differs from most others, it is also more closely affected by a man's surroundings. Of these the most important is social companionship. Very few men or women care to drink in solitude. On the other hand, the evil in most cases begins in sociality. The young see their elders drinking, and they imitate them. Too often the mere child, sent out for his father's beer, or treated to a sip of something stronger when others are taking it, learns wants which nature herself would never have prompted, and the wild beast which lies asleep in every human breast wakes up as at the taste of blood. If ever men and women deserve to be drowned with stones round their necks, it is the fathers and the

mothers who deprave the souls and bodies of their innocent children by inoculating them with the taste for drink!

As our Catholic boys and girls grow up, they have to make their way in life through an atmosphere of drink, as one walks through the miasma and the deadly peril of an African swamp. There is seldom a christening, or a wedding, or a funeral, without unnecessary drinking, or even without disgraceful excess. There is a public-house at every corner, to tempt the working-man, and the working-man's wife, and the working-man's growing sons and daughters. There he finds light and warmth and companionship after his work, to induce him to throw away his hard-earned wages, and to starve and shame his family. There, amidst coarse mirth, and treats and wagers, and jests and reckless language, he finds the dangerous liquor everywhere, ready to be called for, ready to clench a bargain or to honour a bet, to toast good-luck, or to drown disappointment in fire. Can this be the career of rational men? Can this perpetual fume and reek of alcohol be worthy of Christians who are signed with the baptism of Christ, and have been admitted to the Table of the Lord? Can this stupid quaffing, this inane hilarity, this irrational talking, shouting, and quarrelling, be the preparation which immortal souls should make for death, judgment, and eternity?

It is true that there are other motives that drive the poor to drink besides good fellowship. It is

certain that the half-starved and shelterless find it very hard, when the means are at hand, not to purchase the transitory antidote to hunger and depression which is afforded by a small quantity of alcoholic drink. The outcast of the streets, the women who sews sixteen or eighteen hours a day for a bare subsistence, the labourer out of work and heavy of heart—all who have neither food nor fire, neither home nor hope—all these are grievously tempted to drink, and thus led on to tenfold misery and premature death. We may condemn them, but let us also understand them and give them our compassion.

Neither is it among the poor alone that the drink-temptation does it baleful work. Among the poor is seen most clearly the degradation and the misery that ensue; but as for the sin, as God sees the sin, we may often doubt whether it is more rank among the poor or among the well-to-do. These become accustomed to see alcoholic liquor connected with every turn and circumstance of life—with the daily meal, the evening hour, the casual friend, the honoured guest; with the joys, the festivals, and even the sadnesses of existence; with social gatherings and public celebrations, and with all that men do or talk about. Even during business hours there is not a little drinking. Ailments, fancied or real, are the excuse for wine or spirits. Depression, nerves, fatigue, worry, and a hundred other reasons, are alleged as a palliation for indulgence; and such indulgence grows by degrees into a habit which holds many a man, and

many a woman, fast in its fetters. Thus health is ruined, homes are made miserable, religion is disgraced, the sacraments are neglected, and an inheritance of sin is handed on to children who will, one day, rise in judgment against their parents.

It is not necessary to dwell upon the consequences of this widespread plague and pestilence, as they are witnessed among our own people. It is admitted by those whose love of their race and faith is most unchallenged, that the Irish people, in this country and even in Ireland itself, are most seriously weighted in the struggle of life by this unfortunate failing. Other races have worse sins ; and as regards drink itself the Irish poor in this country are not the most guilty or the most degraded, although their characteristic temperament may make them the most easily excited. But what a force for good, what a power in religion and in every department of life, would they be in all the towns of the land, if they were uniformly self-denying and sober ! What ability, what strength, what capacity, are marred by the drink habit ! What pleasant homes, what happy flocks, and what bright and healthy children we should everywhere see, if no family had within it one member who drank to excess ! What is it that makes our priests and our churches so poor—that keeps so many homes in a state of wretchedness—that sends the children to school in hunger and raggedness—that fills the streets with quarrels, blasphemy, and even bloodshed—that enables our enemies to throw the prison statistics in

our faces—and, worse than all, that kills so many souls redeemed by Christ, and sends them to the judgment with the devil's brand upon them—what is it but the madness for intoxicating drink?

What can we do, what can we discover, invent, or put in practice to stop this scourge—to lift this black cloud from the face of so fair a portion of Christ's inheritance? Every one of us, from first to last, is here concerned, for this condition of calamity affects the whole community. There are many of us, thanks be to God, who are free from the vice we are considering; but not on that account are we free from responsibility for our neighbours and our fellow Catholics. St. Paul said to his disciples, "Concerning fraternal charity we have no need to write to you; for yourselves have learned of God to love one another" (1 Titus iv. 9). It is the special mark of a child of Christ to love, not in word only, but in deed and in truth. What, therefore, can be done?

First, it is the plain duty of every man or woman, who is conscious of weakness in regard to drink, to make a serious and constant effort to avoid occasions and opportunities. There are places, and persons, and acts, which may be innocent in themselves, but which to certain temperaments are deadly sin. This is a principle which you learn as children with the first elements of religion. If a man has within himself the drink craving, he can only keep it quiet, and get rid of it, by shunning, like a pestilence, the presence of drink. To such a man, to enter a public-

house is like putting his head on the railway metals before the rush of the express; he cannot hope not to be killed. To such a man, the presence of alcoholic liquor within the four walls of his dwelling is like the presence of a rattlesnake; only a miracle can save him from death. To such a man, to join a friend in a drink, is to touch the shaft that is charged with lightning; his fate is instantaneous and inevitable. Therefore such a man—and there are hundreds in this condition—is bound, even under pain of deadly sin, to avoid such occasions. All those who know by experience that it is more or less certain that if this temptation comes in their way they will fall, must avoid the places, the persons, the acts, and the occasions that will cause the temptation. And, speaking generally, it is the duty of every one, however safe he may seem to be, to keep away from the company of drinkers, to avoid unnecessary visits to the public-house, and to exercise strict temperance even in the lawful use of stimulants. Not to speak of men, it is a well-known fact that many women, both among the poor and the well-to-do, bring themselves to degradation and ruin, in soul and body, by the practice of taking small quantities. Common sense and religion should be strong enough to put a stop to this dangerous and insidious habit, which medical science denounces as strongly as Christian principle. "It goeth in pleasantly," says the Wise Man, "but in the end it will bite like a snake, and will spread abroad poison like a basilisk" (Pro-

verbs xxiii. 31). Alas! how many of these snake-bitten and poisoned ones—these women who disgrace their womanhood—are known to the pastors of souls!

In the next place, it can never be too strongly insisted upon, that one grand means to lessen drunkenness among the very poor is to give them decent houses to live in, and to see that they have enough to support life in frugal comfort. It may be replied that the worst and most incorrigible drunkards are amongst those who earn good wages, and who spend them periodically in a burst of reckless dissipation. All priests know how much truth there is in this. But, for all that, there is more hope of reforming those who are in a position to be fairly comfortable than those who are destitute and starving. Every Christian, therefore, who labours to better the material condition of the dregs of our population, is working in the cause of temperance. It need not be added that a mere increase of wages or donation of clothing is not what is here meant; but chiefly the inculcation of that spirit of decency, that respect for soul and body, that Christian prudence, and self-denial, and resolution, without which you raise men out of the mud only to see them roll back into it as soon as you let them alone.

And here we approach the consideration of the sovereign remedy of all—the endeavour to obtain God's help and grace through prayer and the holy sacraments. Temperance and soberness are spiritual virtues—and virtues, more than other good gifts,

depend upon spiritual help. It is vain, therefore, to hope to reclaim the drunkard or preserve the sobriety of young or old, unless you can bring them to the practice of Christian prayer and religious duty. Even if a man reforms through natural motives and native strength of character, the vices of his sobriety are sometimes more disagreeable than those of his drunkenness. But the Christian is, first, humble — knowing that he can neither rise from evil nor remain constant in good without the help of God. Next, he is hopeful and full of faith, for he knows that he has a heavenly Father who has nothing nearer to His desires than to draw him to Himself. And thirdly, he is obedient—resolutely adopting the means intended by his heavenly Father to save him, and making use of those divine Sacraments which convey the Precious Blood to his weak and sinful soul.

Finally, among the remedies for intemperance, there is that well-known resolution, pledge or promise by which a man endeavours to bind his infirm nature and to strengthen his wavering purpose. This pledge is not a vow, but a good resolution, made aloud and with bended knee, accompanied by a promise to a minister of God. It is obvious that a person who is constantly taking the pledge and constantly breaking it, should not be encouraged in what seems to be mere mockery. But as long as there is a serious intention to keep such pledges, the external promise is a help and an encouragement.

As regards the resolution of total abstinence, it is one which, for some people, is absolutely necessary; because there are some who cannot save their souls without it. But it is also in the highest degree meritorious in those who do not require it. It is a most admirable practice of Christian self-denial. About nine years ago, our Holy Father Pope Leo XIII., in a Brief addressed to Archbishop Ireland, of St. Paul, Minnesota, after reciting some of the evils occasioned by intemperance, said:—"Therefore we commend in the highest degree those pious Societies which so nobly propose to practise Total Abstinence from all intoxicants. It cannot be doubted that such a Pledge (*firma voluntas*) is an opportune and most efficacious remedy for this most grievous evil; and the greater the authority of those who make it, the greater will be the influence of good example in restraining others from intemperance. Especially powerful in this matter will be the zeal of priests."

Like all other extraordinary mortifications, it should not be undertaken without consideration and advice. But when prudently taken up and faithfully practised, with interior acceptance of such inconveniences as it carries with it, and without pride, self-sufficiency, or the habit of reflection upon other people, it cannot fail to draw the heart nearer to Christ. Moreover, it is, in this country, a work of splendid brotherly love. It is an example of the most powerful kind. It is a most precious encouragement to the weak and the tempted. It is a witness, a profession, a rallying

to the side of Christ, in a matter in which the enemies of the Cross of Christ are counted by the hundred thousand. Therefore, may God bless all priests and people who join the League of the Cross, and take part in the battle against drink!

For those who do not make this sacrifice, there are other practices of prayer and mortification which might be taken up for the same purpose. A custom which has been adopted in many churches might with advantage be extended. A card has been published by the bishops, on which are printed nine different resolutions, all referring to the great evil of intemperance. These resolutions are read occasionally from the pulpit, and the faithful are invited to choose one or more of them, and to put them in practice at least for a time. We may not be willing, or able, to abstain altogether; but we can at least abstain partially; we can resolve to drink beer, spirits, or wine not oftener than once a day—or only at meal-times—or never in a public-house—or never on Friday (in honour of Our Lord's Passion), or on Saturday (in honour of the Sorrows of our Lady); or we might give up ardent spirits altogether; or at least we might offer up Mass, or say the Rosary, or perform acts of mortification, for the promotion of temperance and the diminution of intoxication. "Do you take courage, and let not your hands be weakened; for there shall be a reward for your work" (2 Paralipomenon xv. 7). Yes, it is a work which concerns us all. It is too much the custom to treat the great evil of drunkenness

with levity; to laugh, and to pass on. And there are many amongst us who, although they keep out of the class of drunkards, are themselves little concerned for the existence of drunkenness, drink far too freely, and are far too fond of intoxicating liquor. It is not too much to say that if those who are at once moderate drinkers and far from fervent Christians, would arouse themselves to the sense of the black and widespread evil that continues to wreck the Kingdom of God in this country, their example and influence would go far to bring a change for the better. May God inspire them with Christian generosity?

XXIX

THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS

Catholic reading indispensable—Who are the Saints?—Their lives are our example, and afford us information on devotion to our Lord, on Catholic dogma, and on the ascetical or spiritual life ; the source of their power over the heart.

We have addressed you from time to time on the subject of Catholic reading. It has been our endeavour to impress upon all, that, at the present time, it is virtually impossible for a Catholic to keep the faith firmly and to practise it satisfactorily without the assistance of reading. Every one reads—now. The non-Catholic press, which covers the whole country, does harm to the Catholic religion in two ways ; sometimes it attacks the faith ; and at all times it occupies people's time and attention so as to push religion into the background. On both these accounts Catholic reading is indispensable. If we read things that are written against our holy religion, we are bound to read the statements and explanations which will enable us to know what is the truth, aud to be ready to give information to others. And since we give up so much of our time to the news, the paragraphs, the sporting intelligence, and the

amusing or thrilling stories that pour from the press day by day, it is certain that God and Jesus Christ, the Gospel, the Church and the Sacraments, must to a great extent fade and shrink in our thoughts, unless we have also some kind of reading that will effectually keep them before the eyes of the mind.

There are many different kinds of good and useful Catholic reading; for the moment, let us dwell upon one only—upon the reading of the "Lives of the Saints."

"The Saints" are those holy, blessed and happy men and women who, by the power of the precious Blood of Jesus Christ, have passed safely through the temptations and dangers of earthly life, and now enjoy the never-ending vision of their Creator in their heavenly home. They are that mighty crowd which no man can number, of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, which the Apostle of Love saw standing before the throne and in the sight of the Lamb, clothed in white robes and palms in their hands. We know of this great multitude; but we do not know with certainty who they are of whom its august legions are made up. Speaking generally, we cannot be absolutely certain that any individual human creature is in heaven. We may, indeed, possess a very sufficient moral certainty as to the eternal salvation of a large number, whom we ourselves may have known, or whose story is written in the annals of the past. Knowing their life and their death, their virtues, their penance, and their charity,

we may justly presume that they have deserved life everlasting. But the mighty company of the Blessed, as a whole, is, to our eyes, only a blaze of glory, an ocean of bliss and splendour, in which we cannot single out this face and that and trace a soul's history from earth to heaven.

But to this statement there is a most striking exception. There are names of men and women, not a few, although few as compared with the whole number of the Blessed, whom we definitely know to be in heaven. These are they whom the Church has canonized. For the Church, judging either from the words of Holy Scripture, or from heroic holiness of life and authentic miracles, has pronounced that certain servants of God are to be honoured in her public liturgy. Such holy men and women are therefore certainly in heaven.

The various reasons for honouring the Saints, and the ways in which this honour is paid to them, cannot here be entered into. But one very powerful motive for the canonization of the Saints certainly is, that men may profit by their example. There is no such effective exhortation to live for heaven and for God as the lives of those who are in heaven already. To read their story, to study their success and their failures, to know what they said and did, to feel the inspiration of their courage, their generosity, and their devotion to Christ—in a word, to enter into their earthly lives, whilst, all the time, we are conscious that they are living and reigning in

heaven, is the strongest possible corrective of worldliness, of base self-gratification, and of sinful folly. The Church, inspired and directed by the Holy Spirit, and naturally anxious that her children should enjoy so efficacious a means of salvation, has placed before us, in every age, her Apostles, her Martyrs, her Doctors, her Confessors, her Virgins, and her holy men and women of every condition, that we may learn, that we may imitate, and that our hearts may be stirred unto all that is beautiful and all that is eternal. For these heroes of holy religion and of faith are not as the world's great men, whom we admire, perhaps, but do not love. The great fighters, the conquerors, the philosophers, the poets, the men of science—they excite our curiosity and impress our imagination; but they do not touch the inmost and the holiest senses of our being. Our true sympathy, the loving response of our most human feeling, is reserved for those who have thrown themselves into the only profound, ultimate, and real human contest that can be—the soul's contest for her own last end, the conflict between good and evil, the fight for God and for eternity. These are the combatants that we follow with our heart's emotion; for we, too, have immortal souls, we, like them, have to contend with evil, and we have the same last end and the same Heavenly Father. Their example purifies the air of this cold, confined, and sordid world. Beyond all mere words, or lessons, or recorded facts, the memory of the Saints hangs over this earth below "like a

composition of a sweet smell made by the art of the perfumer," to quote the expression of the ancient Hebrew preacher about his own Saints: "Sweet as honey in every mouth, and as music at a banquet of wine" (Ecclesiasticus xlix. 1).

The Lives of the Saints have been written in every possible form and on every scale. There are collections consisting of many huge folio volumes; there are works like that of our own Alban Butler, which for useful information and simple piety it is very difficult to surpass; there are learned monographs on individual Saints, replete with critical and exhaustive research; and there are biographies in pamphlet form, cheap and comparatively short, which are meant for those who are too busy to read longer works or too poor to buy them. Of these last we have a long and excellent series in the penny publications of the Catholic Truth Society. This Society, which in so many ways provides for the needs of Catholics who wish to read, has published about fifty or sixty biographies of the principal Saints. They are written in a plain, careful, and devotional style, and are admirably adapted for constant use in households, parish libraries, young men's societies, and wherever there are Catholics who are doing work in the world and yet aspire to remember the world to come. It will be useful to point out some of the advantages which an earnest Catholic may gain by reading the Catholic Truth Society's series of holy "Lives."

The first advantage is information. This is one of our most imperative needs. Very few Catholics in this country, even among the more educated classes, have any sufficient idea of the extraordinary richness and the wide sweep of the Kingdom of God on earth. The common Protestant idea of religion is that a man should go to church or chapel on Sundays, try to feel "good," and be honest and kindly in dealing with others. This, as far as it goes, is excellent. But the Kingdom of God—the true and real Church, founded by Jesus Christ—has been instituted to preach to the world the doctrine of the Incarnation. Now, the doctrine of the Incarnation—or, in other words, the great dispensation of God made Man—is made up of a vast number of ideas, and entails a large number of most important circumstances. For the Incarnation reveals God to us, and brings us near to God, so that God is no longer a mere vague name, but a Father and a Friend. It also shows us what is meant by a "good life," throwing a new light upon human virtue, and proclaiming some virtues of which the heathen or natural world had no conception—such as Faith, Charity, Humility, and the love of the Cross. It also is the source of a wonderful variety of helps and assistances to man in his spiritual life; that is to say, first and chiefly it has given us the great Sacramental system, with the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist as the principal means of our union with God; and then the great Eucharistic liturgy with all that depends upon it.

All this system—which is really Christianity, and in the absence of which all so-called Christianity is necessarily mutilated and imperfect—is embodied in the creeds and catechisms of the Church, in the decrees of her Councils, in the writings of her Doctors, and in the lives of her children. But, in a country like this, many Catholics, even those who are otherwise well educated, have a very limited acquaintance with this vast and fruitful store of divine teaching. If they would be more assiduous in reading the lives of the Saints, this ignorance would to a great extent disappear.

For example—to take up a few penny "Lives" published by the Catholic Truth Society—a Catholic would soon come to have a more personal and affectionate feeling for our Lord Jesus Christ by reading such lives as St. Hugh of Lincoln, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Bernardine of Siena, St. Theresa, St. Philip Neri, and St. Aloysius. This tender and devotional piety to the person of our Lord is a distinct mark of the Catholic Church. You see something like it, occasionally, among the more simple and primitive Nonconformists; and it is pleasing to cherish the hope that it may really bring many of them to God. But, with non-Catholics, it is almost invariably the fact that their devotion to Jesus leaves out the circumstances that He is God as well as Man. Yet the great purpose of the Incarnation was to show us what kind of a God we have. It is just this precious and invaluable feature which dis-

tinguishes the lives of the Catholic Saints. In Jesus they find their God, revealing Himself in manifestations which the Divine Nature could never have displayed. When they see Jesus to be compassionate, zealous for a soul, kind, meek, humble, and suffering, they read what is really hidden in the abysses of the Godhead—what really exists there, but in some most simple, infinite, and transcendent fashion, utterly beyond the investigation of human reason. Hence, true Catholic devotion to Jesus Christ is the expression and reiteration of the love of God above all things. Those who come to comprehend this great truth have learned Jesus thoroughly; and nowhere can we find the lesson taught so effectively as in the lives and words of the great Saints.

Another most important head of information regards the great doctrines of the Church, their expression in writing, the opposition they have had to encounter from heretics, and the constant labour and glorious success of the Church's apostolic men and great preachers. In the lives of St. Patrick, St. Augustine of England, St. Columba, and St. Helen, we find the never-fading story of the conversion of the nations; in those of St. Gregory the Great, and Venerable Bede, we see something of the unceasing intellectual and administrative life of the Church; St. Thomas of Canterbury, St. Edmund, and St. Antoninus show us the Church contending against the oppressions of the State in the Middle Ages; St. Thomas of Aquin, St. Pius V., and St. Francis of

Sales, show how Catholic Bishops and Doctors impressed the views of the Gospel upon a reluctant world. In these lives, and many others, the great Christian dogmas come up one after another, and we follow their progress and their effects upon the spiritual life.

And there is another branch of Catholic information, not less necessary and not less neglected—the principles of the spiritual and ascetical life. The Saints are distinguished by their likeness to Christ. They express in their lives Christ's humility and poverty, His love of obscurity and His predilection for suffering. These are just the things which the world rejects, and which too many Catholics are disposed to let alone, or even to condemn and despise. It is the mission of the Saints to show forth in actual operation the perfect life as taught by Christ. The perfect life, at least in its details, is not binding upon all. But no one can even save his soul, let alone obtain a high place in heaven, without believing in the perfect life; that is, without seeing and recognising that, if we pretend to love God above all things, we must never place any limits on humility, detachment, mortification, and the love of the Cross. We may not be called upon to practise this or that act of humility, this or that act of self-chastisement; but the aspiration after humility and after the Cross must have no bounds to it; such is the teaching of the human life of Christ. It need not be said that a large number of Catholics habitually ignore this obli-

gation. They have, perhaps, a vague desire to follow and imitate our Lord. But if they saw more clearly and aspired more consciously, they would be much further from mortal sin, and much nearer to God. It is in this that they are helped by the Lives of the Saints. In those lives they see the principles of Jesus Christ carried out, with innumerable striking details, in men and women who are only men and women and not angels. In such lives as those of St. Alphonsus Liguori, St. John Berchmans, St. Peter Fourier, St. Francis Xavier, Blessed Margaret Mary, St. Stanislaus Kostka, St. Rita, St. Vincent de Paul, and others, we have a living and moving picture of the perfect Christian life. To read these lives not only enlarges our ideas, but also shames our indifference. We are not only introduced to a world of which we do not know half enough, but we are moved, we are touched, we are stimulated.

For the power which the lives of God's holy servants have to move our hearts and to draw us to imitation, is one which most of us have experienced, at least in some slight degree. This power has both a natural explanation and a supernatural one. A story is like a picture ; and if it is a good story and a stirring story, it acts upon the heart like a noble and powerful picture. The preacher may enforce the love of poverty ; but the picture of St. Francis of Assisi, trampling upon riches and going about poor and rejoicing, is more eloquent and more effective. The preacher may exhort men to be kind to the poor,

but the picture of St. Vincent de Paul, consuming his life in seeking out the sick and the needy, seizes more strongly upon men's emotions, and shows them more clearly what is required of them. The missioner or the retreat-giver may preach mortification, but the austerities of a St. Rose of Lima or a St. Peter Claver more efficaciously persuade human nature to take up the Cross, for they depict in line and colour to a heedless world the existence of that divine constraint which is exercised on the true followers of Christ by His sacred Passion.

But beyond this natural tendency of the human heart to be moved by a story, there is also in the lives of the Saints a supernatural influence that springs from the dispensation of Christ. He said of Himself that when He should be "lifted up"—that is, when He should have undergone His Passion—He would draw all men to Himself. The Saints are the reproduction and the enforcement of our crucified Redeemer. It is not so much in the painted or sculptured image of the Crucifix that the Passion of Christ is kept before the eyes of the world; it is in the lives of Christ's heroic followers. It is not even by sermons, by the words of the learned and the holy, that Christ crucified is chiefly preached; it is by the eloquence of the words, deeds, and sufferings of that never-ceasing stream of witnesses who began with those who had lived in His company and who will still be represented, when the elect lift up their hands to welcome the coming

of the Judge. Therefore, the lives of the Saints have the power to "draw" the human heart just in the same way as the Passion itself; to draw it and press it, stimulate and urge it, to that affection for, and imitation of, our Blessed Redeemer which is the only path to Heaven. We have examples of this power in the history of the Saints themselves. What is related of St. Ignatius is well known, and you may read it in the Catholic Truth Society's little biography. When he was a soldier and was lying wounded, he asked for books. They brought him a Life of Christ, and a volume of the Lives of the Saints. A new world was opened before him, and he was moved to give up all things and follow Christ. "What St. Francis did, and St. Dominic did," he said to himself, "why cannot I do also?" Many generations before St. Ignatius, similar experiences had befallen the gentleman of Siena who was afterwards canonised as St. John Colombini, and the great baron of Southern France, St. Elzear, who carried through life the impression made upon him by the holy Lives which he heard read in his boyhood in the abbey of St. Victor at Marseilles. St. Theresa owed her earliest feelings of devotion to the books about the Saints which her father had provided for the use of his household. St. John Baptist de la Salle—his "life" is among those of the Catholic Truth Society—from his childhood loved the lives of the saints above all other reading. Let us profit by these examples, and let us be sure that these holy lives, filled with the

wisdom of the Gospel, which is the deepest wisdom of all, will make us all wise unto the things of God. What says the "Following of Christ"? "Study the striking examples of the Fathers, in whom true perfection and true religion shine forth; and thou shall see how poor, how worthless, is all that is done by us. Alas! what is our life, if compared with theirs?" (Book I. ch. 18). Their lives should be read, not as common history, or as profane stories, but as a part of the Gospel message. To believe in all their legends and miracles is no part of a Christian's obligation. But to profit by them we must come with humble hearts, as to heavenly teachers; we must believe in the perfect life as taught by Christ, and study with docile and ready minds the moving details of that life as exhibited in His heroic servants; and we must be confident that from this multiplied image of the lifted up Son of Man there will come spiritual healing to our souls.

The reading of the Lives of the Saints may, therefore, be warmly recommended as an education in Catholic principles and Catholic ways, as a stimulus to our natural sloth and indifference, and as a preservative from that worldliness which is in these days such a proximate danger to souls. All who can read—and all ought now to be able to read, and ought to keep up their reading—should apply to this holy reading regularly, especially on Sundays. It is not that Catholics have no time to read. All read a good deal—but they read much that is useless, and

not a little that is evil. Reading for recreation is by no means wrong ; but recreation and amusement should have their limits, or else they degenerate into waste of time, corruption of the mind, and sin. Catholics know well that, in matters of purity, what is wrong to do is wrong to read about—on account of the danger of taking pleasure in such things. But, apart from the literature of corruption and depravity, which parents should try to keep from their children, and which all should carefully avoid, there is what may be called the literature of folly. Under this head come the silly, sentimental, misleading, and exciting stories which our young people are now learning to devour. Can we not drive out this weakening and debasing trash by the Lives of the Saints ? The effort might well be made, by priests and people. For the better educated there exist in large numbers, even in English, and much more in French, holy lives which, even as literature and biography, are full of interest. Some of the time that is now given to novel reading might be devoted to a reading that would, perhaps, prove to be just as attractive, and would be of infinitely greater utility. As for our boys and young men, it will always be a hard task to make them read anything beyond the sporting, betting, and exciting columns of the newspaper. But it is certain that if we desire to bring up a generation of well-informed and intelligent Catholics, there is hardly any better way of doing so than to interest them in the Lives of the Saints.

Priests who try to create and spread this kind of taste, by clubs, societies, lectures, instructions, or libraries, are certainly wise, and will most likely see the fruit of their labours. Earnest and God-fearing fathers and mothers, who read themselves, and do their best to keep their children out of the streets and to teach them also to read, will find in the Lives of the Saints the most effectual competition with the attractions which all of us regret and deplore so deeply.

XXX

PATRON SAINTS

The Saints show forth the splendour, goodness, and power of the Incarnation—Certain Saints specially solicitous and powerful in particular places, or on behalf of kingdoms, towns, and persons—Advantages of celebrating the feasts of Patron Saints—How this may be done.

THERE is a matter which, though at first sight it may seem of secondary importance, is nevertheless most intimately connected with the Incarnation, and therefore with man's salvation. It is, the Patronage of the Saints.

St. Gregory of Nyssa, preaching on the heroic life and sufferings of the glorious soldier-martyr of Anatolia, St. Theodore, concludes with these fervent words :—"Holy Martyr, pray and intercede for thy country before the King and Lord of us and of thee! We fear affliction—we see danger near! Not far distant is the enemy of all good, ready to fall upon us! Thou art a soldier—fight in our behalf! Thou art a Martyr—use thy right, and speak for thy fellow-servants! And if thy prayer and advocacy are not enough, gather together the choir of thy brother-martyrs, and plead in unison for us who invoke thee!"

The Saints are the manifestation of the splendour, the goodness, and the power of the Incarnate Word.

First, the glory and splendour of Christ shines in the Saints, whom His Blood has purchased. He came to show to the world a perfect human nature. His sacred Humanity, consisting of a body and soul like ours, was endowed with every gift of nature, and crowned with every endowment of the Holy Ghost. It was innocent, it was pure, it was holy. It had the dignity of true humility, the loveliness of perfect obedience, the royal robe of perfect charity. It chose the Cross; and all its unspeakable sufferings were transformed into a flame of love which made the Sacred Heart a holocaust for God and for man. In these splendours the Saints have shared, and chiefly most Holy Mary. Not one of them—not even the Mother of God—was united to a Divine Person as the Humanity of Jesus was. But this very fact made them a greater triumph of the Precious Blood. For just as the clouds of the morning or of the evening spread and give colour to the pure rays of the rising or the setting sun, so the frail earthly natures of the children of Adam bring home more strikingly to our minds and hearts the glories which Jesus Christ came to reveal to the earth. The sacrifice, the self-annihilation, the charity of the Saints are very far from the example of their Lord and Master; but they are more than this sinful world is worthy of. They light up its dark places and glorify all that nature has given it. They encourage every human heart to

hope that since the Precious Blood can do such marvellous things, it will do something even for the poorest and the humblest of us sinners.

This confidence is not deceived. As the Saints magnify the glories of Christ, so they multiply His love. He came, at once for the sake of His own great glory, and for the benefit of men. So the Saints have been made what they are, not for themselves only, but for the souls of the whole world. Our Lord and Saviour was nothing, and did nothing, which had not some influence on the salvation of those souls He loved so much. Every ray of His glory was, and is, an arrow of divine beneficence, intended to heal where it struck, and to save every heart that it pierced. If He was great and royal, His prerogatives were wholly a pledge and a security to erring men that He was their Shepherd, their Father, and their Friend. Each Saint carries a transcript of this message to men. All the virtues of all the Saints are pledges of goodness to their brethren who are in the world. Every Saint is so far an image of Christ Jesus that he illustrates and magnifies the goodness of God to the whole race. And it may truly be said that many a poor and sinful man, looking upon Holy Mary or on some Saint that he loves, has felt his heart soften to the feeling of God's fatherly love—moved, perhaps, more effectively at a given moment by the thought of a Saint than ever he had been by the too much neglected thought of his Saviour.

Finally, the Saints carry into the universe of human destinies the power of Jesus Christ. The dispensation of graces and gifts accompanies the glory of holiness. The nearer a Saint is to his Lord, the more things is he appointed over.[1] Thus, according to the teaching of St. Bernard, all the graces of Christ come to us through the hands of the Virgin Mother—because she is the greatest triumph of His redeeming Blood. But this prerogative of Mary does not interfere with the patronage of the other Saints of God. Heavenly dispensations are not as earthly. In the realm of eternal joy there is an order, a harmony, a play of spiritual colour and proportion, which is only faintly imaged in this universe below. Down from the throne of Jesus come the blessings of redemption through a thousand ministries of glory. It all comes straight from Him, because there is not one in all those Choirs and Hierarchies and Hosts and Armies of Heaven whose being does not take its every movement from the Sacred Heart. But it comes also, in a most true sense, from them, each in his degree and order. Thus the Immaculate Mother, the Angels, the Prophets, the Patriarchs, the Apostles, the Martyrs, the Confessors, and the Virgins, although they are hidden from our sight are part of our life. This is the Communion of Saints—proclaimed in the ninth article of the Creed. They are our brethren; and the difference between them and us lies in this, that

[1] St. Matthew xxv. 21.

whereas we lift up our hands for grace and blessing, they now share in the power and prerogative of the Redeemer, and are able to help us by their intercession.

Devotion to particular Saints, who are called Patrons, is a characteristic of Catholic practice, which is indeed much older even than the Church herself, and which flows from belief in the Communion of Saints. The flock of Jesus Christ has ever felt the conviction that there are certain individual Saints, now in the heavenly country, who are connected by special and intimate relations with particular places and persons on earth. When the Lord God, in the Old Testament, would express His righteous indignation with the people of Israel, He said that He would not hear even Moses and Samuel interceding for them.[1] The three Children in the fiery furnace pray for strength, and say, "Take not away Thy mercy from us for the sake of Abraham Thy beloved, and Isaac Thy servant, and Israel Thy holy one."[2] We read, in the Second Book of Machabees, that Judas saw in a vision the High Priest, Onias, praying for the people; and that he beheld, in another vision, the great Jeremias himself, interceding for his nation —and it was said to him, "This is the lover of his brethren, who prayeth much for the people and for the Holy City."[3] It may well be set down as a law in the dealings of God with men, that those of His servants whom He has made use of for any work or

[1] Jeremias xv. 1. [2] Daniel iii. 35. [3] II. Mach. xv. 12.

office upon earth, carry on that work and continue to hold that office even in their places in the Heavens. Our Lord said to His Apostles, "You are they who have continued with Me in My temptations; and I dispose to you, as My Father hath disposed to Me, a Kingdom; that you may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom, and may sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."[1] Those who have faithfully served God on earth enter into the power of God in the Heavens. Even on earth, as we read in numberless passages of Holy Scripture, their prayers and their merits could move mountains, raise the dead, and conquer kingdoms.[2] They are no less mighty, but much more so, when they sit at the table of the King of Kings, and "judge" where they formerly could only plead. Thus the great Fathers and Patriarchs of the Jewish people were its protectors all through its history. Thus the Apostles, by whose preaching the world received the Gospel of Christ, continue to promote the faith and to protect it even to the consummation of the world. St. Peter can never forget his See of Rome, nor his successors in the Supreme Pontificate. St. Paul unceasingly looks down on the labours of preachers and teachers all over the world in every generation. St. John never fails to uphold those who proclaim the Divinity of Christ. The Evangelists bless and help all who defend Christianity with their pen.

[1] St. Luke xxii. 28.
[2] 1 Cor. xiii. 2; Hebrews xi. 33.

There is not one of that glorious Choir who does not remember the lands where his feet trod and his blood was shed, and pray with powerful pleading for its conversion and its well-being. Neither is this less true of those other holy men who resembled the Apostles in their zeal and success. He to whom a people owes its faith is for ever its patron. Thus St. Patrick has still that special love and concern for Ireland which he showed in his marvellous life. St. Gregory and St. Augustine are England's Apostles still as they were thirteen hundred years ago. St. Boniface can never fail to watch over Germany, St. Anscarius over Northern Europe, SS. Cyril and Methodius over the Slav races, St. Francis Xavier over Japan and the East. Besides these, a thousand cities of Christendom have each its saintly Bishop, perhaps the founder of its Christianity, to whom it belongs in love and guardianship; as, for example, St. Martin of Tours, St. Germanus of Auxerre, St. Hilary of Poictiers, St. Remigius of Rheims, St. Irenæus of Lyons, St. Mellon of Rouen; indeed, there is hardly a town in France, Spain, Germany, Italy, or Britain which does not boast of its saintly Patron and Protector—forgotten, it may be, in many of them, by a generation which heresy or irreligion has corrupted, but still loving and powerful as ever, did the just judgments of God allow the intercession of a Moses or a Samuel to prevail. Thickly scattered over the face of the earth are also the tombs of the Martyrs. Sometimes the sacred relics lie in the

very spot where the servant of God has confessed his Lord, and where he endured the rack, the scourge, and the fire. Hither, during many generations, the faithful have flocked to honour God in His Saints, and to venerate the memory of those who have given their life for their faith. Here innumerable miracles have rewarded the devotion of believers and caused men to rejoice in the Communion of Saints. Here great Churches and glorious Shrines have testified to the power of God and the faith of the multitude. Nations and races have had their special heroes—their leaders, their pioneers, their makers, who have built them up, in faith and religion first, and next in civilisation and the arts; who have been kings or chieftains, bishops, or missionaries. Thus, to say nothing of other countries, we have St. Edward in England, St. Margaret in Scotland, St. Malachy in Ireland, and St. David in Wales. Religious Orders, pious Associations and Congregations honour the unworldly and wonder-working men and women whom God raised up as their founders and propagators. No lapse of time can sever or weaken the bonds that unite them with the work they have done, or with the spiritual children who have entered into the inheritance they have left. Every state and condition, all the Christian arts and professions, all the things that men do and pursue in their earthly career, have had, under the guidance of faith, their patron Saints and protectors. Some fitness, derived from their work in the flesh, or from the spirit and

character of their sanctity, some irresistible choice of the popular will, or some formal appointment of the Holy See, has claimed, and, as we cannot doubt, has secured, for the help and encouragement of the generations which still struggle for salvation, the intervention of those blessed, loving and powerful friends of Jesus now sitting with Him in the heavens. And there are few individual men and women among the faithful who have not one or more among the heavenly citizens, adopted in baptism, in confirmation or otherwise, to whom they cultivate a special devotion and by whom they humbly hope to be guarded and drawn near to God.

Devotion to Patron Saints is, therefore, a widening and an intensifying of devotion to the Incarnate Saviour. They magnify Him ; they illustrate Him ; and like heralds, pages, and ministers, they enlarge the expectations and the appreciation of men, so that no one may miss or mistake his Sovereign, or fail to understand how great a Prince He is. And as all spiritual influences gain force and strength in proportion as they are more individual, our Patron Saints, as belonging to particular localities, and to ourselves rather than to the world at large, bring with their holy patronage a powerful quickening of spiritual life. The church where the body of the Martyr lies, the hallowed spot where the confessor of Christ lived and laboured, the very town or region whose annals are full of the traditions of a venerable name, appeal to that feeling and that imagination which,

although they are not religion, are so useful a foundation for religion. The visit to the shrine, the pilgrimage in company with others—these and similar practices help us to remember the word to come and to turn more frequently to Jesus Christ. Daily invocation, and the use of prayers which enshrine better than marble or bronze the glorious memory of our holy Protector, accustom the heart to live in the presence of God, and soften it to that Christian piety which is the antidote to worldliness. No genuine client of the Saints can be ignorant that in order to honour a Saint it is indispensable to live a good Christian life and to imitate his virtues. A Patron's feast-day cannot be honestly celebrated by any one who has upon his conscience the burden of mortal sin. There is no more grateful homage to the heroes who hated sin and fought against sin, and overcame it through the grace of Christ our Saviour, than to approach the Sacrament of Penance and to make a devout Communion. Worldly amusements are no more agreeable to our Patron Saints than those meats which the foolish Pagans used to place before their senseless idols. Any celebration of a Saint's day which leads to dangerous temptations, to too great freedom of manners, or to intemperance, is much more likely to draw down judgment than to move our Patron to help us ; and if we want a reason why, in latter days, the Saints of our country do not obtain for us the benedictions which signalised the times of our forefathers, we need not hesitate to say that it is

because the honour now paid to them is too often secular and worldly, connected with sensuality and sin, rather than pious and religious, to the glory of God and the good of the souls of men.

It is our duty to keep alive the memory of our Heavenly Patrons, and not to suffer their honour to die out, or their invocation to cease. In these days, and these regions, if we except one or two great names which it is not necessary here to particularise, we must principally connect this devotion with the titular Saints of our Churches. It is, indeed, a sad consequence of the unhappy change of religion that, in this country, the ancient Saints whose names are scattered upon every village, mountain, and valley, have been well-nigh forgotten. The day will come, let us hope, when the old Saints of this land will again be loved and invoked, and when the best known of them at least will be for our children the powerful Patrons which they were in the ages of faith. Meanwhile, the names of the Saints of Wales, of Ireland, and England, are given to the Churches which we are painfully building to take the place of those others whose altars have been broken in pieces and whose sanctuaries have been desecrated. Although divided to some extent in nationality, these servants of the Living God were all united in faith and sacraments, in the Holy Sacrifice, and in obedience to the Apostolic See of Rome. Their prayers cease not for the flock which devoutly invokes them. They are ready to intercede for us. Nay, even before

we invoke them, they do intercede for us, day by day, year by year—obtaining for us many and many a blessing, both spiritual and temporal; protecting our holy faith, and bringing the means of conversion to those whom we welcome into the fold of true Church. With increased devotion, there will be fresh evidences of their power and patronage. A priest who, with his flock, observes with due reverence and solemnity the feast of the Titular of his Church, celebrates a domestic festival of the deepest interest. Can it be doubted that the glorified servant of God, who in God sees and hears the devout piety of those who specially claim his affection, will be deaf, or indifferent? Would it have been so when he lived on the earth? Is his zeal less, or his charity more feeble, or his power shortened, now that he lives with God?

We would remind, then, the rectors of missions, that the feast of the Saint to whom their church is dedicated, whether the church be fully consecrated or not, must be kept by them and by their assistant clergy as a Double of the First Class with an Octave (except in Lent). The Bishop has the power to transfer the "solemnity" to the following Sunday, that is, without interfering with the Mass and Office of the feast itself on its proper day, to permit on such Sunday one solemn or public Mass of the Patron. In most of our missions it is on the Sunday only that any large number of the flock can be gathered to celebrate the feast of a Patron Saint. On such

Sundays, then, let the Church's festival be solemnly kept. Let it be prepared for and announced; let the flock be exhorted to the sacraments; let the external circumstances be as inspiring and imposing as resources may permit; in one word, let the opportunity be taken to lift up the hearts of all to heavenly desires, and to stimulate faith and piety in every breast. And may the Saints whose names we thus invoke, and whose memory we thus honour, draw down innumerable graces upon every flock and on the whole diocese, that we may all live more and more for God, as devout children of the Holy Catholic Church, ready as the Saints were to lay down our very lives for our faith, and looking forward with them to life everlasting.

XXXI

UNION AMONG CATHOLICS

The Catholic community a people apart, and ought to be closely drawn together—Catholics should help one another, should promote the Kingdom of God by combination and organisation, for missionary and public purposes—Catholic Associations.

As you will remember, the grand lesson taught by St. Paul in the Epistle read on Quinquagesima Sunday (1 Cor. xiii. 1, &c.) is the lesson of Charity. That august word means the twofold Love, without which no human being can obtain everlasting life—the love of God and the love of our fellow-men. On this wide subject there is much to be said; but our purpose on the present occasion is to address you on one only of the many issues that are raised in practical life by the great commandment of Love.

At the present day, Catholics, nearly all the world over, are a people apart. They live surrounded by a multitude more numerous than themselves, which is generally hostile to them, and which, at the best, is out of sympathy with their faith and indifferent to their aspirations. It should not be so. The religion of Jesus Christ—which Catholicism alone adequately presents to the world—is intended to take possession

of every heart, to influence all the actions of men, and to be the grand rule and arbiter in all the world's concerns, whether public or private, whether social, commercial, or political. At a few epochs and in a few countries this ideal has been more or less consolingly realised. But there is now, probably, not a corner of the earth's surface where Jesus Christ truly reigns with that complete acceptance and that paramount influence to which He has so just a claim. That claim, it is true, contemplates "a Kingdom that is not of this world." That is to say, the rule of Christ does not constitute kings, or assemble parliaments; it does not raise armies or distribute earthly justice. But its rights over the rulers and the laws of this world, though not direct, but indirect, are paramount. It lays down canons which may not be contravened; it reveals ends and aims which all earthly work and speech must admit and respect; and it enforces on the world the great and immutable code of Christian morality, which, with ever-living voice, it applies in just measure and degree to the varying needs, views, and customs of every region, and the changing circumstances of every generation.

The Catholic community thus surrounded, as it everywhere is, by hostility, by contempt, and by indifference, and inconsiderable as its numbers are in countries like this, is, or ought to be, a community which, in the sense explained, acknowledges Christ as its King. Whatever be the laws, the manners, the progress, or the practice of the world at large,

the Catholic must recognise a higher law and a more imperative duty. For this he is bound to be ready to make all needful sacrifices; to renounce, to bear, and to suffer; and to incur, moreover, the condemnation or the anger of the surrounding world. When his worship, his sacraments, and the divine organisation of his Church, are assailed by word or act, he must summon his manhood and his intelligence to take up their defence. When he is offered the bribe of worldly advantage to become a renegade or a disloyal Catholic, he must remember the words of his Master, and never, by denying Him before men, incur the danger of being denied by Him in the Kingdom of His Father. Above all, he must follow the banner of his King—the banner on which are inscribed the words of justice, sobriety, purity, honesty, and brotherly love—and never forget that, if all men are bound to lead moral and upright lives, then a Catholic is doubly bound, becauses he professes to be a genuine follower of Jesus Christ.

If a community lives up, even inadequately, to such an ideal as this, there follows the consequence that such a community is not only marked off and distinguished from the Godless multitude around, but also that it grows to be closely and affectionately drawn together in itself. Its members all recognise one Heavenly Father; and although all peoples, tribes, and sects, especially those who believe in Christ, must, under all circumstances, remain children of that Heavenly Father as long as mortal life lasts and pro-

bation continues, yet the Catholic idea of God—or rather the Catholic faith in God—is so definite, so full, and so effective, that it constitutes a bond of union the most real, the most intimate, and the most persistent. Views of God, as we find them around us, are vague and shadowy ; views of the Incarnation are incomplete or false. But the Catholic believes in a Creator, who is also the absolutely good and the absolutely just ; who loves and cares for each individual human being in the genuine and intelligible sense of those words, and who, nevertheless, will judge every man with strictness, and will reward or punish him as he shall deserve. The Catholic believes that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh—true God and true Man, to be worshipped, studied, imitated, followed, and loved by men. This living and lively faith makes one family, one household of us all. We may be strangers to each other in race, in tongue, in class ; but not one of these differences can really prevail against the sympathy which springs from our union in God and in Christ. Having the same Father and Lord, the same last end, immortal souls of the same complexion, and the same road to travel, we find ourselves gathered into the same earthly fold, looking up to the same pastors, and accustomed to assemble round the same sacramental Altar and table. How is it possible, then, that we should not feel that every Catholic, by the very fact that he is a Catholic, is an acquaintance, a neighbour, a friend, a brother ? Certainly, it is only those

Catholics who think more of the earthly and the temporal than of the Divine things that will never pass away, who can look upon their fellow-Catholics as aliens. The man whose heart is not warm and open to the children of his own Father in Heaven, must be a man who heeds his Father but slightly, and values but little that which is his true home.

Many practical consequences follow from considerations like these. First of all, there should be among Catholics a marked spirit of mutual forbearance, allowance, and friendly help. Misunderstandings should be avoided, or promptly set right. No man should believe evil of a fellow-Catholic on mere hearsay, or on any such insufficient grounds as men are generally content with. Neighbour should try to understand neighbour, family to understand family, and the well-to-do and the poor, who worship at the same altar, should resolutely cast out of their hearts all mutual bitterness, jealousy, and evil judgment. We would go so far as to say that Catholics should associate with Catholics and deal with Catholics, whenever it is possible. The Catholic householder should try to have Catholic servants; in spite of constant disappointment and of extra trouble, a master or mistress must never forget that there are few forms of brotherly love more meritorious than to afford to young men and women the protection and example of a Catholic home. "As long as you have done it to one of these, you have done it to Me." Catholics should encourage Catholic tradesmen. This,

it may be admitted, is not always possible, and is sometimes more or less inconvenient. But it is certainly an apostolic precept. "Let us work good," says St. Paul (Gal. vi. 10), "towards all men, but most of all towards those who are of the household of the faith." No Catholic who has any influence, position, or opportunity, should neglect to forward the interests of Catholics who are seeking situations, looking for employment, or struggling to make a living. To push forward those who were unfit, would, it is needless to say, be wrong, and often unjust to others. But men and women who are in earnest in imitating their Saviour's compassion, will not shrink from the trouble that is involved in helping the needy and yet doing no injury thereby to any man.

A second consequence that results from our belonging to the Catholic Church, is the duty of being zealous for that Kingdom of God which that Church embodies and carries on. The laity, as you need not be informed, are bound to interest themselves in the means of promoting God's glory, forwarding the interests of our Saviour's passion, and saving the souls for whom He died. These things are not by any means exclusively the business of the priest. If a church is wanted, it is the flock, as well as the priest, who are responsible to Almighty God. It is the business of the flock, each man or woman in his or her degree, to help on the Elementary School by contributing, by seeing that every

child attends, and sometimes by sharing in the management and the collecting. Provision for orphans, for workhouse children, and for youthful offenders, is of the most absolute necessity, if the Kingdom of God is not to suffer heavy loss. Yet how few Catholics there are who show themselves anxious to lessen the anxieties of the Bishop by contributing to our Poor Law Schools, by watching the police courts when Catholic children are dealt with, by uniting in efforts to rescue our homeless or neglected boys and girls, and by providing refuges or homes in our large towns for those who are continually drifting into non-Catholic institutions or Salvation Army shelters, and are mostly lost to their holy faith. No one can be a thorough Catholic who is not animated with this zeal for souls, and ready to make sacrifices in the cause of the great Shepherd of souls. To wrap one's self up in one's money-making, in one's family, in one's comforts, taking no share in saving the souls of the children of poverty, is to be a poor and contemptible Catholic. And no toiling man or woman, however hard he or she may have to work, will ever be any the worse, even temporally, for sacrificing a little time, or a shilling or two occasionally, for such good purposes as the Church pleads for.

Besides this kind of co-operation in missionary and rescue work, there is another kind, which is becoming more and more needful every day. It is necessary for Catholics to combine for public purposes.

Politics, in the usual modern sense of that word, the Church does not meddle with. Bishops and priests, who have a right, like other men, to their views and their opinions, are laudably anxious, like St. Paul, to suppress their political sentiment whenever there is any danger of scandalising or dividing a flock which cannot or will not distinguish between the priest and the citizen. Besides, however lawful and laudable political activity may be, it is rightly considered that a priest should not imperil his sacred character by descending into the arena, nor risk the neglect of his professional duties by occupying himself too much with secular matters. This feeling, however, must not be exaggerated. There are many subjects which touch politics on one side, but which, on the other, intimately affect that faith and morality which it is the Church's office to uphold; such as freedom of worship, civil disabilities arising from religion, primary and secondary education, proselytism in public institutions, and the various injustices of the civil law in a non-Catholic country. Whenever the Church can prudently intervene in questions like these, she has no hesitation whatever in doing so. And in this she has a right to the intelligent and willing support of the whole flock. Whether the matter be one which concerns the universal Church, as, for example, the civil independence of the Sovereign Pontiff, or a whole country, like the education question in Ireland and in England, or some particular town and district, like the children's peril among

ourselves, no Catholic can remain indifferent or stand aloof, but all are bound to do their part by speech, by work, and by sacrifice. We are a small community. But by intelligent combination we can make our influence felt. Such combination, therefore, becomes a duty. But combination, to be effective, depends upon three conditions. First, there must be a genuine and intelligent Union among us. Most of the questions on which Catholic combination is required do not admit of discussion. They are settled, even in their details, by principles of the Divine Law, which it is the business of the Bishops of the Catholic Church to interpret and apply. It is the duty of all intelligent Catholics to make themselves acquainted with the decisions and pronouncements of the Sovereign Pontiff, and of the Bishops, on the practical questions of the day, and to put themselves in a position to take them up, not merely with sleepy acquiescence, but with knowledge and with heartiness. If there are occasions, in a town or district, where discussion is needful or convenient, there should be discussion. It should be discussion which does not end in empty talk, but in a practical decision, and in that suppression of individual views and feelings without which there can be no real working union, and therefore no effective combination. The second condition of Catholic combination is Organisation. Good intentions and sound views are most praiseworthy, but they are of little use without organisation. A man can only make a powerful engine or machine

by carefully fitting part to part; the various parts, as long as they lie scattered on the ground, are inert, powerless, and dead; join them together, with skilled brain and practised hand, and you may move or make whatever you please. Organisation means first the preparation of the units, then the bringing them together, and thirdly, the working of the machine. Practically, in our towns, it means the multiplication of the Catholic voter and the bringing him to the vote. This implies registration; it implies committees, meetings, and the use of the press; and it means extra hard work at elections and other critical moments. The most effective way to secure strong Catholic organisation, not only for voting purposes, but for general Catholic mission, rescue, and social work, is to form, in all our principal centres, a Catholic Association, such as exists in several towns. But such an association cannot be imposed upon the flock by the clergy. If the laity do not initiate such things—and it is certain that a Catholic Association is not everywhere possible—they may be started, but they will speedily languish and die. The third condition of Catholic combination is, that Catholics be prepared to sink their differences, for the sake of agreement on what is more momentous. The Catholic Church has nothing to say to what is ordinarily called political action, as long as it stops short of law-breaking, sedition, or rebellion, all of which are deadly sins. Every Catholic must sympathise with constitutional efforts to break down

Protestant ascendency in Ireland. But Catholics in this country would be doing a service to the religion of Jesus Christ if they would resolve never to allow any cause to make them neglect the contest for faith and religious freedom going on in the country where they live. There can be no reason why political activity should paralyse religious co-operation.

These practical demonstrations of fraternal attachment and loving help to our fellow-Catholics are a part of the seriousness of life. It is only the negligent, the thoughtless, the frivolous, or the abandoned, who will neglect them. They tend towards the realisation of that ideal of peace, unity, and co-operation, which Our Blessed Lord prayed for, and which His Apostles preached without ceasing. They show that men who boast of being Catholics are Catholics in reality—for Our Lord has said, "He that is not with Me, is against Me" (St. Matthew xii. 30). Let us all seriously reflect whether there is not the danger that by our indifference, our fastidiousness, or our prejudices, we are actually living in a state of disloyalty to our only Lord and King.

XXXII

THE GREAT ENCYCLICALS OF POPE LEO XIII.

Pontifical Jubilee of Pope Leo XIII.—His reign distinguished by a series of philosophical and reasoned Encyclicals—The world needs the Papacy—Atheistic Socialism—Christian Marriage—Rulers and their subjects both need the Church—Freemasonry—The State and its Christian Constitution—Modern Liberties—The condition of Labour—Holy Scripture—England—Devotional Encyclicals.

The completion of the twenty-fifth year of the Pontificate of our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII., ought not to be passed over without some notice on the part of the faithful clergy and laity of this diocese.

It was on February 20, 1878, that Cardinal Joachim Pecci was proclaimed Sovereign Pontiff, and on March 3rd, following, that he was enthroned and crowned. Since the martyrdom of St. Peter, only one Pope before Leo XIII. has reigned for twenty-five years, and that one, as you well know, was Pope Leo's predecessor, Pius IX. The long reigns of these two Popes have, without doubt, been intended by the Providence of God to be the means of bringing about certain dispositions and ordinances of that Divine Providence, which we can partially recognise even now, but which the world will understand better in another generation. But whatever be God's purpose

in thus prolonging the lives of His Vicars, the fact is itself remarkable and full of interest; and it is no wonder if the Catholic world makes use of such an opportunity to demonstrate its faith, its homage, and its affection. For the whole of the past twelve months —ever since the day of last year on which the Jubilee year began—there has been prayer, pilgrimage, and the humble offering of gifts. The manifestations of Catholic spirit will naturally reach their height on March 3rd of the present year (1903), when, among other pilgrimages, an important deputation from this country, headed by the Duke of Norfolk, will offer the Holy Father their congratulations and their filial devotion.

The venerable Pontiff—who, as we must not forget, enters his ninety-fourth year on March 2nd—published on St. Joseph's Day last year a touching Pastoral Letter on the subject of his Pontifical Jubilee. In that Letter he reviews the teaching of the twenty-five years of his strenuous and busy pontificate. We cannot do better at this moment than follow him in a retrospect which brings out in a most striking way the unity of aim that has animated this great Pope from the very moment of his accession, and the immense fertility of expression by means of which he has so many times said the same thing with new and powerful effect. It is impossible on the present occasion to recapitulate the history of his reign. This would require a volume. He has had to deal with every State and interest of Europe. The con-

stant assertion of the temporal independence of the Holy See—the repeated conflicts with the government of France—the *Culturkampf* in Germany—reform in Spain, Austria, and Hungary—Anglican Orders and other English interests—Russia—the United States —Canada—South America—the near and the far East—each of these is a heading under which will be found, in the Pope's collected works, a whole literature of Constitutions, Letters, and Decrees, and each of them recalls periods of exciting history, the details of which will be eagerly read by those who come after us. But we must confine ourselves for the moment to his teaching.

It is well known that the holy Father has published a series of Encyclical Letters which in many respects differ from the kind of Letter that his predecessors were accustomed to address to the Church and the world. These Letters have not been concerned simply with definitions of faith, or with questions of ecclesiastical law. Doubtless the present Pontiff, like those who have gone before him, has had to treat of the faith, and to make or enforce the Church's law. The very first document that occurs in his collected Acts is the Constitution in which he re-establishes the hierarchy of Scotland. But Pope Leo's chief Letters have been those of a philosopher; a philosopher who has undertaken to reason with the world on the great and fundamental issue, Is it, or is it not, the truth, that the world's well-being, progress, and salvation depend upon its accepting the revelation of God and

the Church instituted by Christ? As he states in his own words, from the very beginning of his pontificate he has strenuously laboured to make men understand and appreciate the Church—her beneficent purpose, and her inexhaustible treasures. He had no sooner been enthroned than he issued the Encyclical beginning *Inscrutabili*—his primary Pastoral Letter to the world—in which he shows in eloquent language how truly and deeply the world needs the Church and the Papacy. This Letter is, as it were, his text. During the next quarter of a century he was to enlarge upon that text. In the winter of the same year appeared the Encyclical *Quod Apostolici*, against the prevailing atheistic Socialism. The world, exclaimed the Pontiff, cannot do without religion. The revolt of the sixteenth century exalted human pride and led the way to the negation of all authority, human and divine. But princes and peoples, the State and the family, are now reaping the poisonous fruit of that false teaching, and there is no longer any tranquillity or peace in public life or in private, because no man has any law but his own cupidity. In the following year came the Letter on Christian Philosophy (1879)—a careful and most courageous statement of the Catholic view on questions and methods which underlie all theology and all the formularies of our faith. The general flock can hardly enter into this important pronouncement. Let it suffice to say that this Encyclical has restored unity of language and expression to the Catholic schools; it has given theologians a platform

to stand upon, and enabled them to carry on their glorious speculations in the boundless field of revealed truth without having to construct a language or to stick fast in their first steps.

Before the Pope had been two years in the Chair of Peter, he issued a long and carefully prepared Encyclical on Christian Marriage (February 10, 1880). His idea in placing an exhortation on marriage at the very beginning of his apostolic teaching is evident, when we read the first lines of the Letter. The contract of marriage lies at the root of all social relations. If the evil spirit of the world can unchristianise marriage, the Christianity of the family and of the State is destroyed. Jesus Christ came to "renew" the world; that is, to purify, raise up, and sanctify all human duties and relations. More especially does His Christian Dispensation elevate and ennoble the union of husband and wife. For the lawlessness, the impurity, and irresponsibility of nature and of paganism, the Gospel and the Church have substituted the modesty, the unity, and the severe obligations of the New Law, surrounding the human contract with the Divine glory of a Sacrament, and guarding it with the awful sanctions of their authority. For it is Christ's will that men should not live by nature only, but according to grace; and grace means the Church and the Sacraments.

A year later, the Pontiff turns to the princes and powers of the world, and in the Encyclical *Diuturnum*

(June 29, 1881) remonstrates with them for their acquiescence in a base and modern doctrine which must make every throne unsteady and all political stability impossible. All earthly power, he shows, is from God. The people may choose the king or the minister, but whether he be king or minister, once chosen his power is from above, and he can claim obedience in God's name. This is the doctrine which the Church has upheld during all the ages. The throne cannot do without the Church. The people cannot do without the Church. She has to rebuke tyrants, and she has to denounce rebellion. Unhappy the State that pretends to be able to exist without recognising both the eternal law and the law's earthly exponent—the Church of Jesus Christ.

The first six years of the reign of Leo XIII. (1878–1884), during which these four great Pastoral Instructions appeared, were years of anxiety and conflict. The German persecution was not yet over; the government of France was harassing the Religious Congregations; the school question was at fever heat in Belgium: with all these troubles and many others the Holy Father had to deal as Head of the Church. But his mind, rising above all the hostility of statesmen, above mere diplomacy, above the routine of administration and permissible compromise, had seized on great principles, and had seen that what the world and the Church required was not only protests, arrangements, transactions, and denunciations, but the steady insistence on the obligation of

every order of men and every individual human being to enter into the supernatural order and to remain in it.

But in the seventh year of his Pontificate, the Holy Father began a new series of great Letters, in which he went more deeply into the reasons of things, and came to closer grips with the enemies of God's Kingdom on earth.

On April 20, 1884, was given to the world the now well-known Encyclical *Humanum Genus*—on the sect of the Freemasons. This is a long Letter in which the Sovereign Pontiff, in moderate and measured language, expresses his reasoned conviction that the great enemy of Christianity is that widely-spread network of secret Societies which is generally known as Freemasonry. He declares that he has no intention of accusing individual Freemasons, nor even of holding all Masonic Societies responsible for the worst excesses of the sect. There are Freemasons, and even branches of the Society, which in some instances have never realised, and in others repudiate, the extreme consequences of the principles they hold. Freemasonry as practised on the Continent is "naturalism." That is to say, it is the negation of revelation, and the assertion of the independence of human reason. It is not a mere philosophy—it is a propaganda. It translates its principles into acts. It puts forth every effort to defeat and prevent the action of the Church upon society. It works for the separation of Church and

State. It strives to banish from the State every trace of what is distinctively Christian. It oppresses the Church, interferes with her liberty, despoils her of her property, and persecutes her ministers. For these ends it uses all the engines of modern government; it labours to control the press; and it lays its deadly hand upon education in all its branches. It is especially hostile to the Roman Pontiff, to his prerogative, to his public acts, and to his temporal independence. It goes much further than this, and openly denies the existence of God and the spirituality and immortality of the soul. The Encyclical enters into all these points, and it concludes by advocating a great counter-organisation; an organisation of the Bishops, with their clergy; of associations like that of the Third Order of St. Francis, and of St. Vincent de Paul; of Catholic people in all ranks, and in every kind of Catholic fellowship—fellowship of labour, of speech, of the Press, and of works of mercy.

Within a year and a half, this denunciation of the Freemasons was followed by another long and weighty Encyclical, on the State and its Christian constitution. This was the *Immortale Dei*, dated November 10, 1885. Its theme was the paramount duty of a Christian State to serve God, to foster religion, and to afford freedom and protection to the divinely instituted Church of Christ. Both State and Church are divine. Each in its own sphere is independent. But unless God has willed to set up

confusion and unceasing war, one of these two powers must be supreme when men's religious and eternal interests are concerned. That power is the Church. This principle lies at the root of what is called, by excellence, "Christian" society. In opposition to it, we have what are called the modern doctrines; the doctrines of false liberty, of revolution; the doctrines that would banish the Church from legislation, from education, from family life, and that would bind her as a servant to the civil power, or, at least, treat her as a stranger, and refuse to recognise her divine mission. All Catholics, each in his own sphere, are bound to endeavour to Christianise the State to which they belong. They should take their share in public and political life, doing their best to neutralise the evil principles of modern government, and to infuse into the institutions of their country the life-giving blood of true wisdom and of the Christian virtues. Catholics should be Catholics before they are politicians, and those who follow public life or who write in the public press should never forget that it is their first duty to labour for the interest of the Church of Christ.

The next great Encyclical came out some three years later. This was the Letter beginning *Libertas*, and treating of the true idea of "Liberty" (June 30, 1888). The Church, says the Pontiff, has been accused of being the enemy of liberty. This accusation could only be possible to those whose idea of

liberty was utterly erroneous. Liberty, as a physical fact of human nature, consists in being able to choose either good or evil. But Liberty, as a moral attribute of man, is really the being able to do, without hindrance, what is right and good. The being able to do what is bad and wrong is an imperfection and a misfortune. The exercise of freedom, therefore, should always follow right reason. Hence, it should follow the Law—because the law is the embodiment of what is right and reasonable. The first of all laws is the natural law, written upon man's heart by God. The civil law must be founded on the natural and eternal law. True liberty can never give any man the right to break either the natural law or the civil law. The Pope, therefore, thus defines civil liberty: it is "the being able, by the help of the civil law, to live according to the dictates of the eternal law." Liberty, in this sense, has always had the support of the Church. But what is modern "Liberalism"? What are the modern "liberties"? They are the dethronement of God's eternal law, and of the laws of the divinely-constituted civil power, and the substitution of individual reason. Modern "Liberalism"—the word is here used in its wide European sense, not as we use it politically in this country—is mere license. The modern "Liberal" recognises no revealed law. He denies that the Church, or its divinely-appointed Pastorate, has any right to control either the State or the individual. This is an attitude which the Holy See, as the representative of the revealed law of

Christ, has consistently opposed. The Popes have always condemned what are called the "modern liberties," and they will continue to condemn them. Liberty of worship, or the liberty to profess any religion or no religion, must, in the nature of things —if there is a divinely instituted Church—be unreasonable and indefensible; although, in the present divided state of Christendom, religious toleration is permissible. Liberty of speech, or the freedom of the Press, in its wide sense, must likewise be unreasonable; because the liberty to propagate error and corruption can never be right. Liberty of teaching, again, must always be controlled, unless we would act unreasonably, by the prescriptions of that revelation which Christ has given to the world. Liberty of "conscience," if we thereby understand the right to choose any religious opinions we please, has no foundation in right reason. But if we take it to mean that right which every man has to discharge without hindrance his duty to his Creator, then it is the most radical and most precious of human prerogatives. The Encyclical concludes by showing what is meant by "toleration," and explains how the Church has never opposed national independence, or political liberty.

This splendid philosophical and Christian treatise on the nature of Liberty was followed, eighteen months later, by the Encyclical *Sapientiæ Christianæ* (January 10, 1890), which may be said to apply to practical life the principles there laid down. The

Pope in this Letter urges upon Catholics that the faith is their inheritance and their treasure. They must fight for their faith ; they must propagate their faith. For these purposes they must be united in thought and in action. They must not confine their acceptance of Catholic truth to matters that are absolutely defined, but must dutifully conform themselves to the teachings of the Pontiff and the Bishops. The Church knows nothing of political parties—but all Catholics must be united in Catholic action. They should avoid both the extremes of timidity and of intemperate zeal. They should follow their lawful chiefs, the Bishops of the Church. Any one who refuses to fight for Christ, is against Christ.

It was in the summer of 1891 that Pope Leo XIII. sent forth what may well be considered as the greatest of all his Encyclicals. This was the one beginning *Rerum novarum*, on the rights and duties of Capital and Labour. The Pontiff, like his predecessors, has always recognised that the solution of the constant disputes between masters and men lies in pointing out where both are right and in what both are wrong. It needs a very sure grasp of the true principles of property and justice, natural and Christian, to do this effectually ; and modern writers are misleading, inadequate, and often mischievous, precisely because they ignore the Gospel and blunder in the application of the law of nature. The Pope, therefore, begins by laying down the lawfulness of private property. This is directed against what he calls the Collectivists—

the modern Communists, who hold and preach that "property is theft." He then explains why it is that "labour" is a necessity, and how the fruits of a man's labour are his own, so far as the labour goes. But the operation of the stern law of ownership and labour is, in the Christian dispensation, to a great extent mitigated and regulated by "charity"—an element which must never be overlooked by a Christian. Moreover, the State is bound, in certain respects, to interfere in the interests of the worker. The State may regulate the hours of labour for the good of the community; it may make laws for special and dangerous trades and occupations; it may watch over the employment of women and children; and it should guard the sanctity of the Sunday's rest. These matters are set forth by the Pontiff at considerable length; and the effects of his exposition is to sweep away the whole of the confused half-truths which modern journalism is constantly presenting to its readers about property, work, charity, and State interference. But the most important section of this great Letter is that which now follows. The Pope takes up the question of wages. The modern economic school teaches that wages are a mere matter of contract; an employer and a workman make an agreement, the one offering as little, the other getting as much, as he can. But the Pope shows that this is neither Christianity nor right reason. Wages are not solely a contract, for the simple reason that a large majority of mankind must work for wages in

order to live. By nature's law the worker has a kind of right to a wage. Personal labour is not a thing that can be bought and sold like cattle or merchandise. You are bound to be as considerate to personal labour as you are to the person of a man who is made to the image of God. The man must have a wage; he is a rational being, in God's likeness, and a brother of Jesus Christ. You cannot apply mere mechanical rules to him, or leave him to the operation of any inanimate and dismal law, like supply and demand, or dear and cheap markets. You cannot accept an offer to work which is wrung from him by sheer despair or by imminent starvation. Consideration for the person and family of the one who labours must therefore always influence the question of wages. This leads the Pontiff to lay down that every man who is willing to labour has a right to such a wage as will secure to himself and his family a frugal and sufficient maintenance The workman, on his side, is bound to be equally considerate in his dealings with his employer.

This Encyclical, of which we have given only the barest outline, and which may be read by all in the authorised English version, naturally attracted great attention, not only from Catholics, but from the world at large. In its pages may be found the true and Christian solution of the controversy between employer and employed. Property, State-interference, labour, capital, wages, combination—on all these heads the Pope states the rational and Christian view, in language of classical elegance; and as far

as the teaching authorities of the Catholic Church are concerned, this Letter has become the text-book of their social action. The great doctrine of the "living wage," here for the first time placed on its rational and Christian basis, and consecrated by the head of the Catholic Church, has profoundly affected all economic discussion. Leo. XIII. has taken the side of the workers, but with all that moderation and just assertion of the rights of property which should appeal to the intelligence of thinking men.

We must pass rapidly in review the Encyclicals of the last ten years. The Letter we have just considered may be said to have completed the series of the Pope's instructions on the duties of the citizen, the Catholic, the employer, and the worker. He has enforced afresh his profoundly thought-out ideas in numerous minor Letters and addresses. We may especially mention the Encyclical of January 18, 1891, beginning *Graves de communi*, on the subject of Christian Socialism.

Passing over a very important Encyclical on the Interpretation of Holy Scripture (1894), beginning *Providentissimus Deus*, and many other solicitous and prudent pronouncements, during the last decade, on the inspiration and interpretation of the Word of God, we must conclude with a rapid glance at his more devotional Addresses to the world. The most remarkable of these are the Encyclicals, some twelve in number, which, year after year, he has published on our Blessed Lady and her Rosary. The Pope,

in these Letters, filled as they are with simple piety and fruitful devotion, shows that he firmly grasps the doctrine of the Saints, that happier times for Church and State can only be hoped for through prayer to God and by the intercession of the Mother of Jesus.

At Easter, 1895, appeared the touching and earnest Letter "to the English nation" (*ad Anglos*), in which with many expressions of affection, he calls upon all who are dissatisfied with religious uncertainty and confusion to unite in earnest prayer for light and unity. At the end of this Encyclical he prints the prayer, "O Blessed Virgin, Mary," written by himself, and now recited everywhere in the country during Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, for the conversion of England and Wales. In the following year he issued the constitution *Apostolicæ Curæ*, in which he decides, by his supreme authority, the question of the validity of Anglican Orders.

A few months after this address to the English, another long Encyclical was given to the world, on the Unity of the Church (*Satis cognitum*, June 29, 1896). The subject was constantly in the Holy Father's thoughts. When addressing the English, it was the idea of the one, true Church that gave fire and weight to his fatherly words. Now he treats the matter at length—setting forth, from scripture and the early Fathers the proofs that Christ's Church is one in doctrine, in organisation and in government; and ending with the strenuous call of St. Augustine,

"Beloved brethren, hold fast all of you to this, that as God is your Father, so the Church is your Mother."

On the 9th of May of the following year (1897), came forth from the pen of the indefatigable old man the fervent and moving Letter "On the Holy Spirit"; and those devotions were instituted at Pentecost, which now take place at each recurrence of that great festival of Divine love. The Letter on Devotion to the Sacred Heart, of May 1899, will still be in your memory; so, doubtless, will be that on "Jesus Christ our Redeemer" (November 1, 1900), in which he takes occasion from the approaching end of the nineteenth century, to stir up men's hearts to turn to Him Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and in which he reiterates the great Pauline doctrine, so strongly prized by himself, that in Christ must all things be "renewed." And the last great devotional Letter that shall here be mentioned is that of May 28, of this last year, *Mirœ caritatis* (1902). This is on the Blessed Eucharist—which is shown to be the "continuation of the Incarnation," the chief strength of the Christian, and the great means of our becoming like unto Christ.

Such, dear children in Jesus Christ, are the principal pastoral instructions of the long Pontificate of Pope Leo XIII. There are others innumerable, many of them long and elaborate utterances, addressed to Kings, Christian nations, heathen princes, and the Bishops of various countries. We have

enumerated a few in order that the faithful may realise, on an occasion like this twenty-fifth year of the Pope's reign, how he has been labouring, how he has fed the flock, borne testimony to the world, and upheld the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. These Encyclical Letters are not, all of them, in the hands of the flock. Many of them are, or ought to be. They have been translated, and may easily be procured.[1] But they are read by the people's Pastors, and are made the text and ground of pastoral teaching. The whole flock, therefore, should unite in thanking God for this Pontificate of solid and Christian instruction and exhortation, and in offering prayer to Heaven that the Pontiff who has ruled so long, and has never let a year, we might say hardly a month, pass, without uttering the careful thoughts of his ever solicitous heart, for the good of men, may be blessed with every blessing, by the Heavenly Father for Whom he has laboured.

[1] A new and cheap edition of the late Father Eyre's book, "The Pope and the People," is now being issued by the Catholic Truth Society. It gives most of the Encyclicals here described.

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